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Number 99
October 1992

Siege • Castles 2 • Gateway

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD



LucasArts' X-Wing Fighter

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COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

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Psalms 9:1-2

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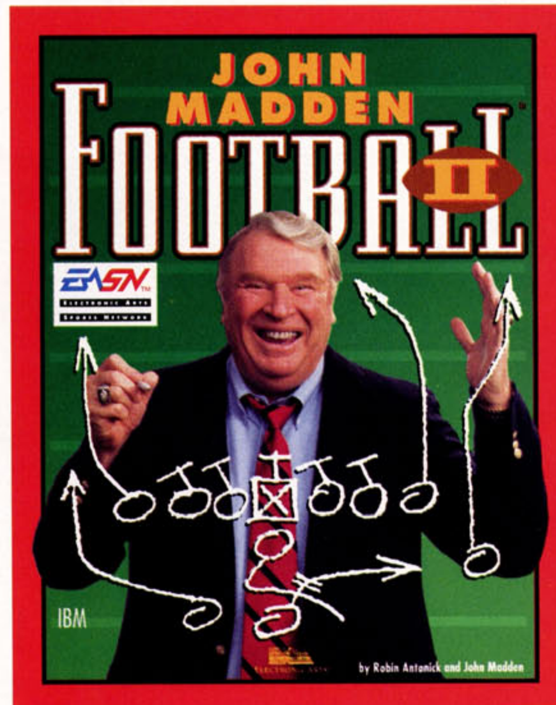
Departments

THE MOST HIGHLY RATED GAME IN FOOTBALL.

For John Madden, "Football's a game of ratings and matchups." That's why John Madden Football™ II captures all the subtle nuances, all the personality of the game itself. You'd expect that with up to 8 ratings per player, 35 players per team, 28 pro caliber teams, plus an All-Madden squad.



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Peek

Accolade
San Jose, CA

SNOOPY'S GAME CLUB: "Good grief!!" This tripartite game package is for youngsters ages 3-8 and, naturally, features those lovable Peanuts characters. The package includes a memory game (flipping over tiles to find matching pairs), animated puzzles with four to 64 pieces each and a look-alike hunt against the clock. Peanuts characters represent the game's AI for young ones to compete against and the skill levels can be set low enough so that no toddler will ever feel like poor Charlie Brown. Complete with 4 crayons and a picture to color, kids can mail back their colored picture for automatic membership into "Accolade's Kids Club." IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

Apogee Software
PO Box 476389
Garland, TX 75047

COMMANDER KEEN — "GOOD-BYE GALAXY": Yet more quality shareware from the Kings of Directsoft, **Apogee.** In this series of action adventures, Keen must run, jump and pogo his way through an action landscape frought with peril. Like the more involved action games, in this one Keen can find secret passages to underground caverns and other secret areas filled with goodies. Kids will be keen on Keen without stripping their parents of the green. IBM (Shareware — $39 for 3 game series). Circle Reader Service #2.

COSMO'S COSMIC ADVENTURE: This exceedingly cute action game is in the best tradition of the running, jumping, scrolling, die-a-lot games popular on dedicated game machines. This one, however, is visually creative and includes a number of novel game play innovations (with a Jim-Henson-on-Loco-Weed-style purple and green polka-dot character that has suction cups for hands and can climb walls, as well as gaze up and down with the screen scrolling in syncopation with his head's motion). To top it all off, it's reasonably priced. IBM (Shareware — $39 for 3 game series). Circle Reader Service #3.

WORD RESCUE: The Bad Guy Illiterati have conspired to rid the world of books! And it's the 4-8 year old player's job to help Benny Bookworm save the world's literature by matching up simple words with their picture while avoiding the baddies in the way. Unfortunately, its Nintendo-style action may be too difficult for its educational age-range. IBM (Shareware—$15 Registration). Circle Reader Service #4.

Centron Software Technologies, Inc.
1500 NW 3rd Street #101
Deerfield Beach, FL

GAMES MASTER FOR WINDOWS: From the people who brought you *Puzzle Master* and *Casino Master* now comes their multi-pack of "Mac-like" Windowsware. *Games Master* is a grab bag including *Dominoes, Blackjack*, a *Pyramid* solitaire card game, some *Tetris* looking puzzle games and a host of "slider" puzzle variations. It is, essentially, standard fare for minds that like to wander as they look through the Windows on their computer. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

Cineplay Interactive
2580 NW Upshur
Portland OR

WILL VINTON'S PLAYMATION: Anyone who has been to an animation festival these days may have noted the increasing number of computer-generated animated shorts. Now, with this robust package, amateur animators can try their hand in this new medium. Features include the ability to model and render objects with splines and patches (as opposed to polygons), a library of objects and basic shapes, quickly generated multiple views, libraries of complex character motions and a plethora of shadowing, mirroring, light tracking and image wrapping capabilities. Is the next Max Fleischer or Chuck Jones lying dormant within you? IBM ($499.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

Compu-Teach
78 Olive Street,
New Haven, CT 06511

DESTINATION: MARS!: This fantastic little skill and knowledge builder not only bolsters students' factual knowledge about the space program, but also gets them to *think* rather than just looking things up in a book. Players, ages 11-17, begin as crew members of the space shuttle, working their way up through the ranks to conducting missions on the space station and, finally, leading the expedition to Mars. Along

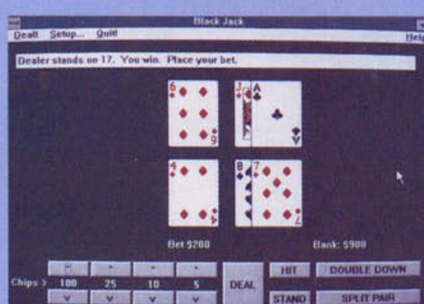


Snoopy's Game Club


Commander Keen--
Good-Bye Galaxy



Cosmo's Cosmic Adventure



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Will Vinton's Playmation

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the way, they are routinely asked for simple programming tasks and must deal with unexpected turns of events which are solved with a little thought and some occasional eye-hand coordination. A condensing of the entire space program in a box, this product is not only educational, it is downright *compelling* to play! Apple II, IBM, Mac ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

Davidson & Associates
Torrance, CA

HEADLINE HARRY & THE GREAT PAPER RACE: The player, as the rising young ace reporter for the *U.S. Daily Star*, must wind his or her way through U.S. history (1950-1990) and geography to save the paper from being scooped by their rival publication, that refugee from the bottom of a birdcage, *The Diabolical Daily*. One must gather clues and race from city to city, conducting interviews without wasting time on fruitless prospects, in order to beat the motly assemblage of reporters the rival's scandal sheet. Under the tutlage of *Daily Star* editor Headline Harry himself, any reporter might find that he/she has what it takes to climb the ladder to a Pulitzer. Ideal for the *Carmen Sandiego* set, *Headline Harry* is newsmaking in more ways than one. Mac ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #8.

Dr. T's Music Software
124 Crescent Rd.
Needham, MA 02194

BOOM BOX: As if hearing the digitized voice in *Wing Commander* weren't enough, here is yet another reason to own a *SoundBlaster* card! *Boom Box* is a software "toy" that is, in effect, a do-it-yourself music maker. Users can create their own mixes, save them, import saved tunes and remix or add reverberations to them with remarkable ease. One can also import IFF, VOC and WAV samples. While designed for even the computer illiterate to use with ease, a bit of DOSy knowledge would help when it comes time to save and load files. Beyond that, users can call their own tunes and jam 'till their brains turn to jelly. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #9.

Impressions Software
7 Melrose Drive,
Farmington, CT 06032



Headline Harry & The Great Paper Race



Boom Box



Air Force Commander


Boppin'


SWOTL: Do 335 Pfeil

AIR FORCE COMMANDER: In a world of flight simulators, it is interesting that we get two aerial *strategy* games, almost back to back (see the *Battle of Britain 2* review on page 152)! *Air Force Commander* puts players in an "Operation Desert Storm" kind of atmosphere, turning their computer into a central control display with a green lined map and radar static. Airbases are alerted and sorties conducted by individual airplanes as they attack or defend targets in hostile lands throughout the Middle East and Persian Gulf regions. The player must be part air traffic controller and part minister of production to balance all the factors needed for successful play. Modern and thought-provoking, this real-time strategy game has enough scenarios to get players going quickly and keep them exploring for quite a while. Amiga, IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

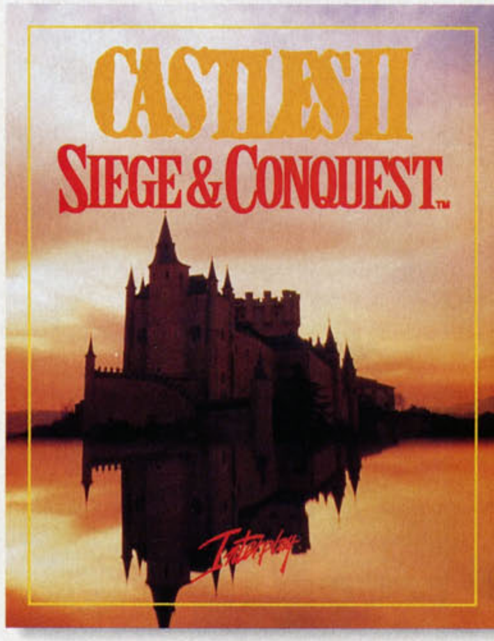
KarmaSoft
PO Box 1034,
Golden, CO

BOPPIN': Can violent arcade games really warp a young mind? Well, the creators of this bizarre spatio-logic game might be used as supporting evidence. The premise: the nauseatingly cute Sweety Hunnybunz, the singing treacle bear, has captured all the video game Bad Guys and locked them in geometrical prisons leaving hundreds of video game Good Guys out of work. Two players can simulateously play Yeet and Boik on their escapade to free the imprisoned Bad Guys and get their buddies out of the bread lines. While not exactly stimulating or original as far as its game mechanics go, Boppin' is a daffy, self-deprecating critique of arcade culture. Amiga ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

LucasArts
San Rafael, CA

SWOTL: Do 335 Pfeil-Aircraft Disk
Just when one thought LucasArts and the Third Reich had exhausted their rightful allotment of aerospace innovation, they come out with the Dornier Do 385 "Anteater", "the most dangerous piston-engined fighter ever built!". From the odd look of its front and rear, push-pull prop design, one must wonder just whom it was dangerous to. Regardless, the Do 385 was one of the Reich's last desperate attempts at air-

Do You Have What It Takes To Win The Crown?

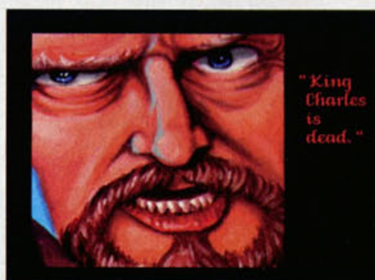


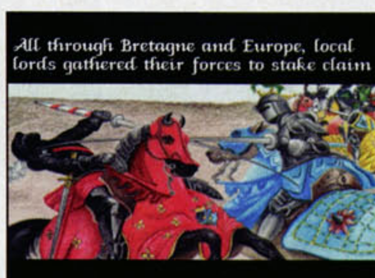
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CASTLES II: SIEGE AND CONQUEST is a completely new game system, based on the best-selling *CASTLES™*. In addition to building castles, you can now siege, attack and destroy them. Forge political and military alliances with the other computer players, or fight and conquer them in the fields or in their castles. Scout unknown territories, spy on and sabotage enemies, recruit infantry and cavalry, gather gold and grain, mine for iron, trade for timber and stone, research new weaponry, and pay the church for indulgences ...just a few of the fun things that go into a good, medieval day's work!







MS-DOS Screens Pictured.

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Circle Reader Service #74

superiority, and is the last of **LucasArts'** planned aircraft add-on disks. IBM ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

New World Computing
Hollywood, CA

VEGAS GAMES ENTERTAINMENT PACK: New World tries to increase their market share of worker unproductivity with their first entry into the 'lite' gaming market. This *Windows* package contains a rather ordinary collection of Vegas diversions including a 'Jacks or better' video poker game, a Black Jack table, 3-barreled slot machine, keno board and roulette table. Definitely a casual package for the causual gambler. IBM ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #13.

Norsehelm Productions
P.O. Box 494388
Redding, CA 96049-4388

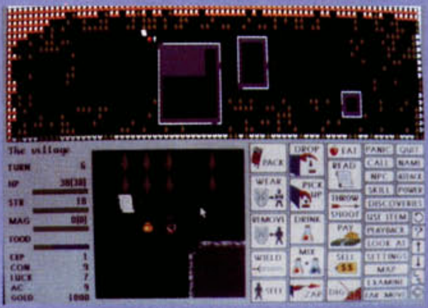
RAGNAROK: What at first glance appears to be a role-playing/adventure game, turns out to be more of an exploration and item management exercise of the most mind-swamping sort. Players will run their little horn-helmed warrior around a VGA landscape, hoarding hundreds of weapons, suits of armor, magic items and food stuffs while bashing the 200 hundred monsters that inhabit these realms, based loosely on Norse myth. Its primitive interface, along with its repetitive and number-intensive game system (which, BTW, owes much to an older Macintosh shareware game) makes this one a diversion for only the most stalwart and easily amused adventurer. IBM. Circle Reader Service #14.

Recreational Software Designs
24 Nathan Lord Road,
Amherst, NH 03031

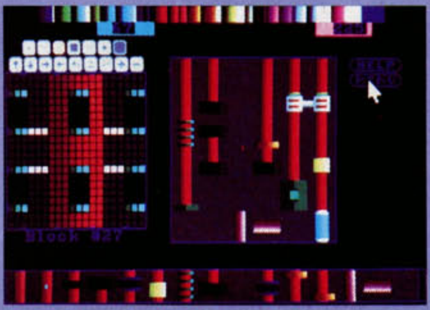
GAME-MAKER: Based on the assumption that it is as much fun to design games as it is to play them, here is a program to help fulfill the needs of wannabee arcade game designers. *Game Maker* is a strong set of tools in the form of a CAD (Computer Aided Design) program that allows players to design, program and "paint" their own arcade/adventure style games (the kind where a single character must overcome the obstacles in a world through the acquisition of wealth, power and objects). Users can create maps, characters, monsters, items and all the other



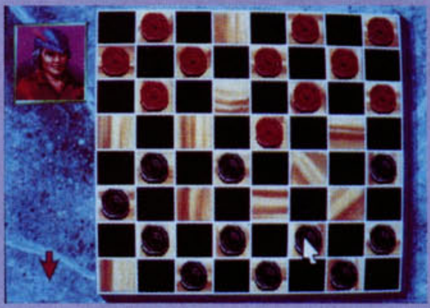
Vegas Games Entertainment Pack



Ragnarok



Game-Maker



King Graham's Board Game Challenge



Leisure Suit Larry's Casino

goodies that their imaginations can dream up. Monsters can even have a certain amount of AI put into them. In addition to a bit of "painting" customization, sounds, too, can be adjusted to suit. IBM ($89.00). Circle Reader Service #15.

Sierra On-Line
Coarsegold, CA

KING GRAHAM'S BOARD GAME CHALLENGE: The game company on the hill has launched a line of budget software for IBM computers which feature simple little games. Each package is about a half-inch thick (although the packages themselves are entirely disposable) and comes with a single 3.5" disk and generic installation instructions. Documentation beyond that (like how to play the individual games) is on-line. Each package ostensibly ties in with a **Sierra** game series (some games are directly *from* the adventures) and sells for $9.95 (although the marketing people have cleverly marked out $14.95 above that price). The two games in the *King Graham* package, Checkers and Backgammon, look as if they are similar to those found on the **Sierra Network**. IBM ($9.95). Circle Reader Service #16.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY'S CASINO: It seems as if Larry Laffer has purchased the Tramp Casino in Atlantic City at a foreclosure sale. In this mini-package he offers gambling types the chance to take their chances on a slot machine, a Black Jack table and a video poker machine. Surprisingly (and thankfully), the package does not include a lounge act. IBM ($9.95). Circle Reader Service #17.

PARLOR GAMES WITH LAURA BOW: Computer Gaming's "That Girl" takes time out from sleuthing to play a few parlor games; namely, Dominoes and Yacht — a Yhatzee derivative. These appear to be jazzed-up versions of games from **Sierra**'s *Hoyle's Book of Games* series. IBM ($9.95). Circle Reader Service #18.

ROGER WILCO'S SPACED OUT GAME PACK: If you didn't have enough quarters to play Ms. Astro Chicken in *Space Quest IV*, if you didn't get enough quality time with the Monolith Burger assembly machine, or if you just didn't get to see the gory death screen enough times in the sand skimmer sequence, then **Sierra** opens







Plan 9. The critics hated it. Bela Lugosi died during it. And his double has stolen it.

Lugosi's replacement is still bitter after 33 years from critics' reviews dubbing his only movie "The Worst Film of All-Time." Even though he remained faceless, he intends to bring glory to the cult classic using more footage of himself and. . . **colorizing** it. As the studio's Private Eye you'll search over 70 locations, find the 6 reels and screen the film, frame-by-frame, to ensure that the warped actor did not cut Bela from the flick. Using actual digitized film footage, you'll sweat each scene, examining **Plan 9** with slow motion, freeze frame, fast forward and rewind. It's up to **you** to preserve its original awfulness. **Available for MS-DOS & Amiga.**



Circle Reader Service #77

KONAMI® GREMLIN®

A Publishing Partnership

Peek

up this little space portal of opportunity to give expression to unsatisfied drives. Cut and pasted out of the *Space Quest* game, this package is for the truly masochistic. IBM ($9.95). Circle Reader Service #19.

ROBIN HOOD'S GAMES OF SKILL & CHANCE: Brave Sir Robin invites all-comers to a little tournament commemorating his heroic deeds in *Conquest of the Longbow.* Included in this package are all three major action sequences from *Longbow*, including the archery practice sequence, the *Nine Men's Morris* strategy game (a medieval board game of skill) and the famous stick fighting 'game,' played first by Robin and Little John. IBM ($9.95). Circle Reader Service #20.

Three-Sixty
Campbell, CA

INSIGHT: Who are you? And why do you behave the way you do? We are all seeking *Insight* into our own nature and this software package appears to be a clear and focused lens with which to view ourselves. Based upon the Kahler Process Model, this program will analyze one's answers to a 30 minute questionaire and provide a personality inventory based upon 6 categories. With this information, the model will then provide *Insight* into one's stress coping mechanisms, and how one responds to different sorts of work environments and personality types. What are one's strengths? Which sorts of situations energize? Which deflate? How can one recognize one's own personal stress signals so that self-defeating behavior can be avoided? When combined with the audio tapes included in the package, this model may provide useful answers to the difficulties inherent in our stress-rich worklife. IBM ($99.95). Couch and Austrian psychoanalyst *not* included (or needed). Circle Reader Service #21.



Parlor Games With Laura Bow


Robin Hood's Games Of Skill & Chance



Insight


Pebble Beach Golf Links & Waialae Country Club

T&E Soft
Lafayette, CA

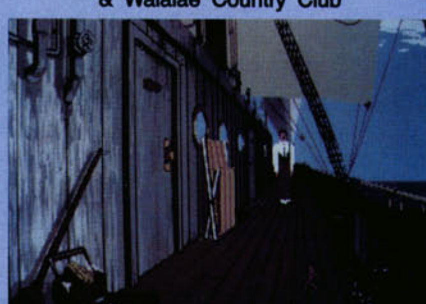
PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS AND WAIALAE COUNTRY CLUB: If one can get the kids off of the Super Nintendo (send them to bed early!), perhaps one can pick up the controller and try out these Pacific golf courses. Though the graphics can't touch **Access**' IBM *Links*, they are still quite nice, and the swing mechanics seem a bit easier than most computer-based golf games. The standard golf amenities are included in these packages: tournament play, grid-marked greens, and tips from the club pro. These games certainly put the 'tee' in Nintendo. Super Nintendo. Circle Reader Service #22.

U.S. Gold
San Jose, CA

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE: It seems **U.S. Gold** has been cruising for code in Europe these days and has turned up this adventure game from **Delphine**, the producers of *Out of This World* and *Future Wars* for **Interplay**. Although the French game group has used their characteristic super-smooth animation technology in this one, it seems they have lost some of their former gameplay shine. Once past the frustrating code-wheel copy protection, one discovers that this is a rather ordinary murder-mystery adventure with a rather inconsistent interface and dull graphics. If one can't find the stiff in the game, then one can certainly find one in the box. Amiga, IBM ($54.95). Circle Reader Service #23. CGW



Word Rescue


Cruise For A Corpse



Destination Mars

It makes J-8s cry and MiGs fighting mad.

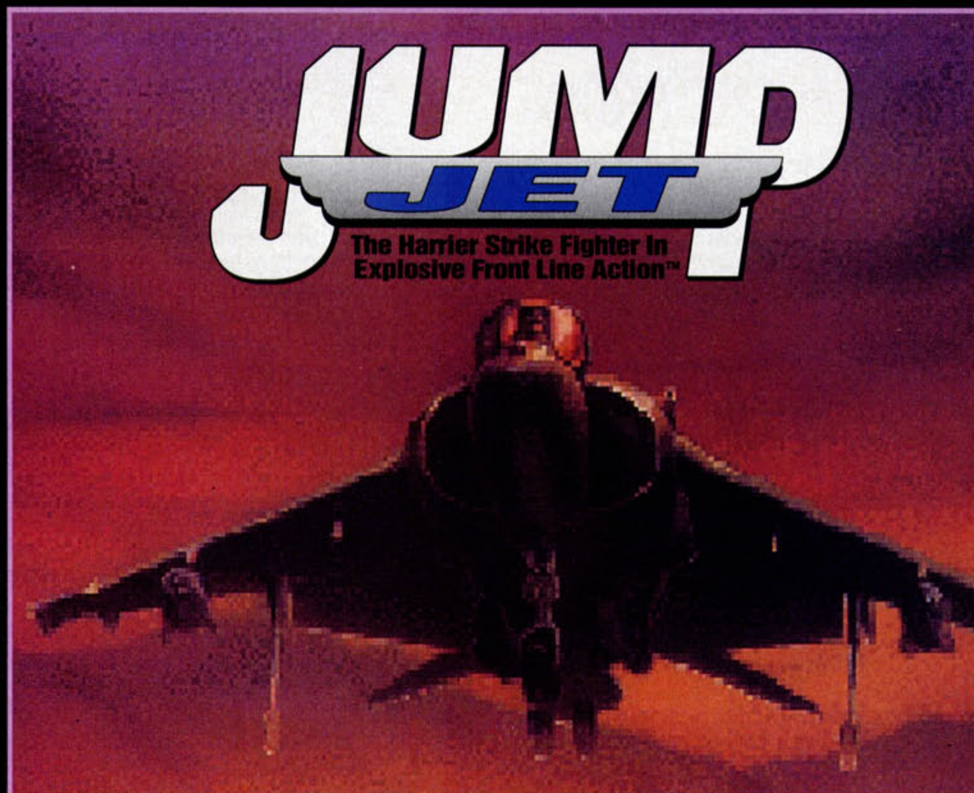
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Inside The Industry

MICROPROSE

MicroProse Acquires Paragon Software

MicroProseInc.,(NASDAQ:MPRS recently announced the purchase of Pennsylvania-based Paragon Software Corporation, current publishers of the *Mega Travellor* and the *Twilight* series of role-playing games. **MicroProse,** which published *Civilization, Darklands* and *F-117A Stealth Fighter*, has distributed Paragon products for several years. The acquisition is intended to strengthen what has been perceived as a healthy partnership. **Paragon** has invested heavily in the creation of state-of-the-art design tools and **MicroProse** expects that research and development to pay off as the parent company continues to broaden its product line over the next few years. **Paragon**'s titles will now be marketed under the **MicroProse** label.

Broderbund

Broderbund Purchases PC Globe

After a lengthy period of legal maneuvers and counter-offers, **Broderbund Software (NASDAQ: BROD)** finalized its acquisition of **PC Globe**, publishers of *PC Globe*, *MacGlobe* and geographical learning games, on July 2, 1992. **Broderbund**, publishers of the *Carmen Sandiego*, *Kid Pix*, *Print Shop* and *Living Books* lines of products, reputedly offered circa $1.5 million for the geographical software company. **PC Globe** was reported as being sought by two other companies, including **IntraCorp**, before the **Broderbund** deal could be finalized.

SIERRA

Sierra Adds Bright Star Technology

In addition to signing an exclusive marketing agreeement with French educational (and entertainment) software publisher, **Cocktel Vision, Sierra On-Line (NASDAQ: SIER)** has continued its expansion into the growing educational market by acquiring Washington-based **Bright Star Technology**. **Bright Star**, the Macintosh-oriented publishers of critically-acclaimed products such as *Alphabet Blocks* and *Talking Tiles*, is expected to both strengthen the fast-growing educational/edutainment line at **Sierra** and add additional technologies, in terms of synchronized speech and *HyperAnimation*. In integrating **Bright Star** into the corporate structure, **Sierra** is expected to use the same successful strategy of allowing the new subsidiary to function as a wholly-owned, independent unit of **Sierra** (i.e. in the same manner as the parent company has allowed **Dynamix** and **The Sierra Network** to function).

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Electronic Arts Signs Six New Affiliates

Electronic Arts Distribution, the distribution arm of **Electronic Arts (NASDAQ: ERTS)**, has signed six new "afilliated labels." Prior to the signings, **EAD** had suffered the loss of agreements with **The Software Toolworks** and **LucasArts Games**. With the signings, **Electronic Arts** affirms its commitment to CD-ROM entertainment titles. All of the six new affiliates are CD-ROM publishers: **Pop Rocket**, **NovaLogic**, **Ebook**, **Humongous Entertainment**, **ICOM Simulations**, **Zelos!** and **Ebook**. **ICOM**, of course, is best known for its *Deja Vu* and *Shadowgate* graphic adventures for the Macintosh (published by **Mindscape**) and their own *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective*. **NovaLogic** is best known for *Wolf Pack* (published by **Broderbund**) and *The Rocketeer* (published by **Walt Disney Software**), but is expected to turn heads with its upcoming *Maximum Overkill* and *Ultrabots* products. **Humongous Entertainment** is Ron Gilbert's (*Secret of Monkey Island* and *LeChuck's Revenge: Secret of Monkey Island II*) new company and is expected to publish a children's graphic adventure (*Putt-Putt Joins The Parade*) as its first product. **Pop Rocket, Inc.** is the new company of Joe Sparks (co-developer of **Reactor**'s *Spaceship Warlock* CD-ROM product) and is expected to launch its first product as a rock and roll adventure called *Total Distortion*. **Zelos!** is a publisher of informational CD titles and **Ebook** is the publisher of optical-based art and literature titles.

ACCOLADE™

Accolade Signs with MLBPA

Accolade announced on July 29, 1992 that the company had reached an agreement with the Major League Baseball Players Association to publish a data disk with digitized color photographs of actual players. The HardBall III MLBPA Players Disk will feature authentic player photos and statistics (through mid-season 1992) from all 26 major league teams. The MLBPA disk is expected to debut in August of 1992 at a suggested retail price of $24.95 and will be followed by a companion disk, The Big League Ballpark Disk, in September of 1992 (as MSRP of $24.95). The latter disk will feature 18 accurately modeled professional stadiums. CGW

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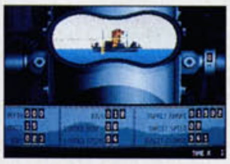


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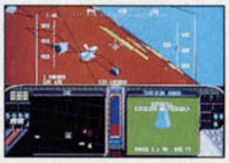
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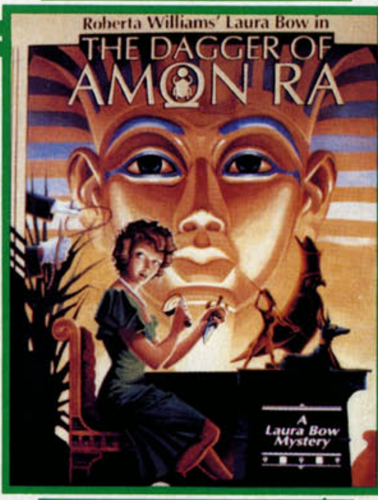
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Laura Bow in
The Dagger of Amon Ra
Whodunit, Art Deco Style



by Chuck Miller

TITLE:	Laura Bow in The Dagger of Amon Ra
SYSTEM:	IBM and Compatibles, 286 or Better
PRICE:	$69.95
GRAPHICS:	VGA-256 or EGA-16, Tandy VGA Only
SOUND:	All Major Sound Cards
PROTECTION:	Document Look-Up/Symbol Identification
DESIGNER:	Bruce Balfour
PUBLISHER:	Sierra On-Line, Inc. Coarsegold, CA

Cruising on a luxury liner can prove such a relaxing experience. The gentle rocking of the ship as it cuts through the ocean waves, inhaling the fresh sea air and gazing upon clear, blue skies all add to a peaceful, restful journey. Unless, of course, one is unfortunate enough to be strangled in his sleep and stuffed conveniently out of sight in a luggage trunk. Then it's simply "rest in peace," my friend. Thus begins the second installment of the Laura Bow mysteries — *The Dagger of Amon Ra.*

A Stab in the Dark

The year is 1926. Art Deco, the Charleston and speakeasies are in vogue. It is also a time of great fascination with discoveries unearthed in the field of archaeology, especially relating to ancient Egypt. As such, the excavation of the Temple of Amon Ra by the eminent Egyptologist Pippin Carter, Ph.D. has received more than modest attention, especially one artifact — the Dagger of Amon Ra. Suspicion, intrigue and murder will envelop all those who come into contact with it.

Cub Reporter, Bear of an Assignment

College-educated since her last appearance, Laura Bow finds herself a cub reporter for the *New York Daily Register News Tribune* (the Trib). Her first assignment focuses on the newly discovered Dagger which, as events reveal, was stolen shortly after it arrived at the Leyendecker Museum. Thus, her task is to investigate its theft. However, what starts as a simple assignment soon involves Miss Bow, and the player, in a deadly string of murders. If not careful, her name may appear in the obituaries rather than as the byline to her story.

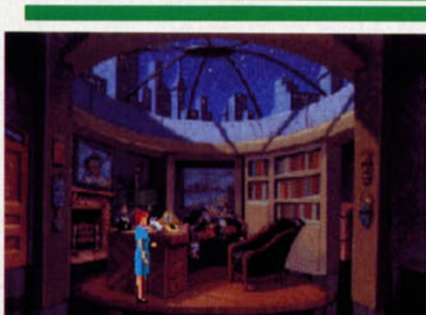
Automated Conversations

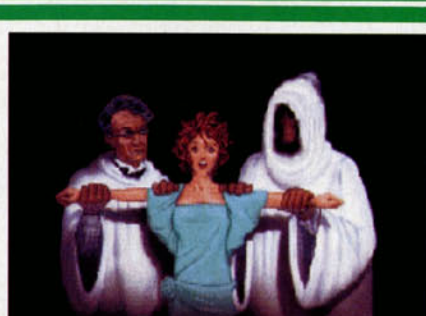
The Dagger of Amon Ra is a traditional **Sierra** animated adventure, though much improved over the original Laura Bow mystery, *The Colonel's Bequest.* All actions are accomplished through **Sierra**'s new icon-based graphic interface, including talking with other characters. This simplicity of interaction has opened up adventuring to a larger audience by making it easier for the neophyte to successfully complete a game. However, the experienced adventurer may feel a bit cheated by the loss of "verbal" interaction and the speed with which he or she can now complete a quest.

Sierra, however, has improved their icon-driven interface in this latest effort with the addition of the "Ask" Icon. Earlier releases employed only a "Talk" icon which severely limited character interaction. At least now the player can question those he or she meets about numerous people, places and items.

Play Acting, Adventure Style

Dagger is presented sequentially in a series of six acts. The








Paladin II
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Impressions

first two acts involve mostly fact gathering, though several important items are obtained. Act 3 provides the real "meat and potatoes" of the adventure, where most of the game's object-oriented puzzles must be solved and during which much of the evidence necessary to successfully complete the game is acquired and examined, usually at the scene of a murder. Little changes in Act 4, though the pace does increase. However, Act 5 introduces a major change in the tenor of the game, becoming more urgent and frantic. The final Act places the player in the crime solving sequence where Miss Bow must exhibit her superior sleuthing abilities.

All considered, the flow of the story moves along well with only a few exceptions. Game play in the first two acts seems rather slow and repetitive, unduly constraining the player's options, due to a limited number of locations and puzzles, and requiring an excessive amount of questioning of suspects. Although possibly designed to provide some variety in play, it actually results in a rather slow and somewhat boring beginning to the adventure. Until Act 3 begins, the actual puzzle solving is too sparse to maintain a strong interest on the part of the player.

Once into Act 3, however, *The Dagger of Amon Ra* becomes quite absorbing. The puzzles employed are logical and varied in complexity. There is also a real sense of suspense developed, enough to startle one when "happening" upon a murder. From this point forward, the game is very difficult to set aside.

Works of Art

The Dagger of Amon Ra is a visual and aural treat. From the gorgeous hand-painted, Art Deco-style backgrounds to the evocative roaring 20s orchestrated soundtrack, a certain richness permeates the atmosphere of the game. Those involved in the creation of *Dagger* should be justifiably proud of their efforts, having provided a beautiful, ambient world to explore. Animation is well executed, though character movement still needs some improvement. While most movements appear lifelike, a few tend to exhibit a sort of nervous "jumpiness." Steve Dorian, in particular, has a stilted, robotic way of walking reminiscent of Monty Python's Ministry of Silly Walks. Hopefully, **Sierra** will smooth out the animated wrinkles in future releases.

Documentation has received significant attention, and lends a sense of authenticity to the adventure. Provided is a brochure on the Leyendecker Museum, complete with a map of ground floor exhibits, and a booklet entitled the Official Guide to the Leyendecker Museum which contains, among other things, a description and depiction of the Egyptian gods (used for copy-protection).

Cab Fares and Caveats

As usual, a few criticisms must be leveled against this otherwise fine product. Cab rides are, unquestionably, too long! These "jaunts," apparently tied into the length of the accompanying music, cannot be bypassed. Taking the cab quickly became a tedious and unwelcome process.

A more critical concern involves items essential to the game which can become "lost" or unobtainable if not acquired before a new act begins. For example, if the player fails to collect the boot found in the medieval armor display during the fourth act, it will be gone once Act 5 commences. (Two other critical items which should be procured before reaching Act 5 are the cheese from the security office and the snake oil from the mammalogy lab.) A new act should not commence until the player has acquired all that is necessary for use later in the game.

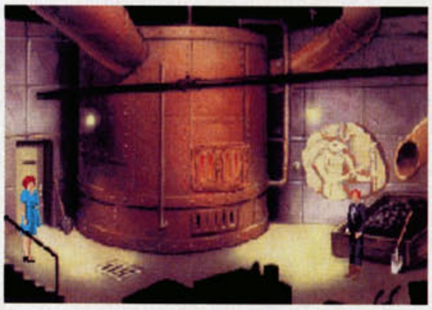
A final matter concerns the game's conclusion. Once Act 5 ends and the last act begins, the player has no further opportunity to examine any evidence collected. Only his or her memory and written notes are available to aid in identifying the murderer(s) and motives. This is rather an abrupt way to inform the player that he or she should have been writing everything down during play, as there is no access to one's inventory at the conclusion of the game.

Final Deductions

Laura Bow in The Dagger of Amon Ra proves itself to be another quality adventure from the fertile minds at **Sierra**. It's refreshing to see a game presented from the perspective of a female character, as well as to find a subject treated seriously while maintaining both a strong sense of realism and a touch of humor. Once past the rather slow-paced, moderately interesting first two acts, game play becomes quite enthralling — so much so that the rest of the game seems to pass much too quickly.

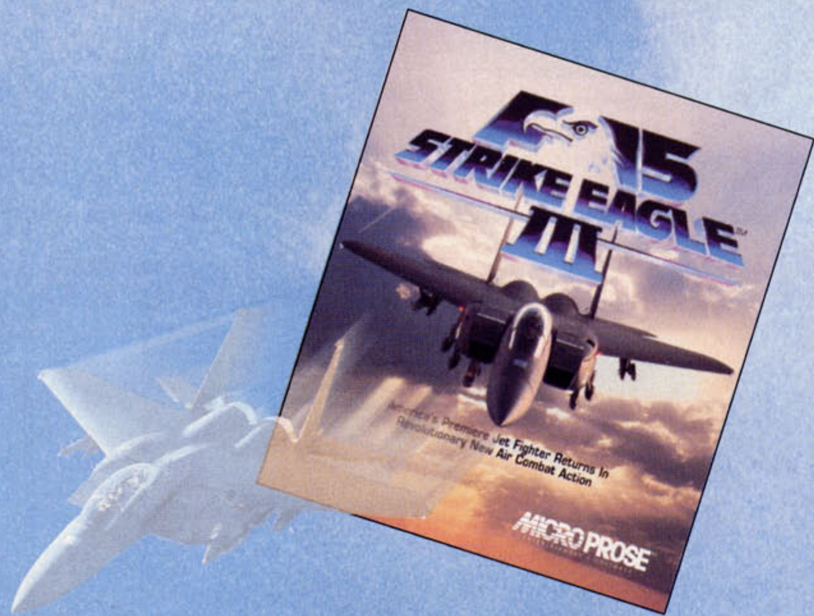
Regardless, armchair detectives and amateur sleuths alike will find *The Dagger of Amon Ra* an enjoyable adventure and a nostalgic excursion into 1920s America. Though one could wish for more object-oriented puzzles in the early stages, and a bit more game play overall, few will not enjoy their stint as a reporter for the Trib — and you can quote me on that! CGW







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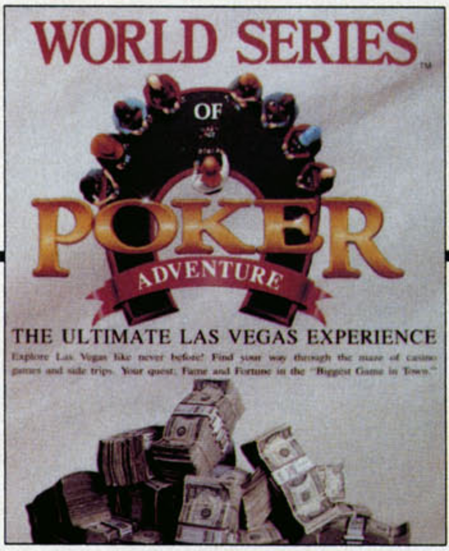
The Shark's Quest
How To Enter The World Series of Poker On $59.95

by
Lonnie Brown

There are poker games. And then there is No Limit Texas Hold 'em. It's the game that separates poker players from people who sit around a table and play a game with one-eyed jacks and deuces wild.

No Limit Texas Hold 'em is the game used to determine the world's best poker player. Each May, at Binion's Horseshoe Casino in Las Vegas, 216 card players pay $10,000 each to get into the tournament. Eventually, two players will sit at the same table. One of them will walk away with $1 million.

This tournament is the showcase of *World Series of Poker Adventure*, a game designed to give a player the feeling of going to Las Vegas, visiting a casino, sightseeing at Lake Mead and competing in the World Series. The game is from **Mojave Software**, a Las Vegas-based company. Although it's a new company, the game's programmer, Wayne Russell, already has a top-notch computer poker game to his credit: *Ante Up! at the Friday Night Poker Club* from **ComputerEasy**. Russell, a self-taught programmer, has worked closely with Jim Albrecht, coordinator of the World Series, and several past World Series champions to make the tournament in *World Series Adventure* as realistic — and hard to win — as possible.



In this single-player game, players sign in with their name, nickname, hometown, and age. The on-screen player who walks around the casino can be either sex..

Once registered, the player will fly to Las Vegas, where he or she is greeted at the airport by a Binion's limo driver and taken to the casino-hotel's registration desk. Each player has $5,000 in seed money, grandpa's gold pocket watch (which keeps real time) and a return airline ticket. The latter two items can be hocked for cash should the first item disappear.

Which it soon does. Upon walking past the registration desk, the player encounters a video poker machine ($1, $5 or $25 tokens available). There is also a slot machine that usually will take in more money than it dishes out. If one prefers, a blackjack table is available. Like some casinos, the dealer only uses one deck, so anyone who knows anything about counting cards is likely to be able to add to their stake at this table.

If players get bored, they can wander outside and find a travel agency offering a trip to Lake Mead or a theater offering several acts. More useful, however, is the pawn shop and a book store. Here, books with helpful articles can be purchased. They'll be sent up to one's room in the hotel for leisure reading. The articles, about 15 to 20 screens of text, offer poker playing tips from Bob Ciaffone, Mason Malmuth and David Sklansky — some of the world's best card players. It's money well-spent. Players are likely to need this advice in order to win at the "ring games" where six-to-eight other players gather round for seven-card stud, Texas Hold 'em, or its variation, Omaha.

In addition, there are 24 floors to explore within the hotel. Mostly, they're all the same. So, the most useful spot is the player's own room. It contains a gambling log that shows the length of time invested in playing video poker, slot machines, blackjack, and poker. It keeps a running breakdown of the money won or lost at each game and a rate of winning or losing per hour.

Players will soon learn that if they are to earn the $10,000 needed to enter the World Series, they'll have the best odds at the poker tables. There are also "satellite" games available: at these tables where one may compete in a no-limit hold 'em game against eight other players. There's a $1,125 buy-in which gets each player $2,000 in chips. The catch: Only one player will walk away a winner, with a $10,000 prize. That's the best way to get into the World Series: win a satellite. Playing in one is an experience.

Shoot Out On Seventh Street

No-limit Texas Hold 'em seems like an innocent enough game: Two cards are dealt face down to each player. A betting round follows. Then, three cards are turned face up in the center. The cards on the table serve as "community" cards — players combine them with the two they hold to form the best hand. The first three cards are followed by a betting round, after which another card is dealt face up to join the trio. A betting round is followed by a fifth, and final, face-up card. Then, a final betting round.

One would think that, with five cards out of a possible seven exposed, it would be easy to judge how good the hands held by oneself or the other players might actually be. Unfortunately, fortunes have been lost on that assumption.

TITLE:	World Series of Poker Adventure
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Wayne Russell
PUBLISHER:	Mojave Software Las Vegas, NV.

To complicate matters, there are "blinds." These are mandatory bets made at the start of each hand. The player clockwise from the dealer bets a "small blind," and the player to his left bets a "big blind," which is double the small blind. Blinds usually start at $25 and $50. The deal moves around the table, so all players have to bet the blinds. They increase as the game progresses. During the four-day World Series of Poker, the blinds reach $15,000 and $30,000, and that's even before a card has been dealt. When "the blinds go up," players

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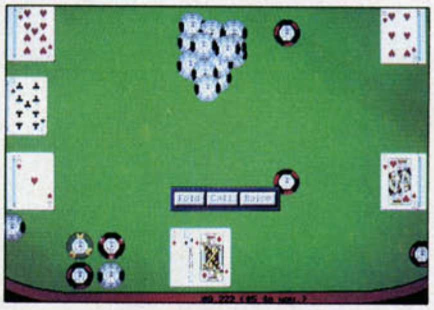
don't have an option of sitting out too many hands. If they do, they'll quickly go broke. So much for card play. What about the game?

Buffet Quest

The adventure part of it — walking around the casino, touring Lake Mead — is a cute diversion. There aren't any puzzles to solve and the floor show in the theater isn't a graphic spectacular. If one ventures out to Lake Mead, however, it may be a good idea to click on the trash can. There is occasionally a bit of money to be found. Like everything else in Las Vegas, however, these activities are but sideshows to the gambling at center ring.

The poker games are where the best graphics reside. The card table is shown from an overhead view. The cards and chips are realistic. Bets are made from pop-up buttons using the mouse (the game requires a hard drive, mouse and VGA monitor).

The tables are the same for the ring games, satellites, and World Series. At the World Series, however, players are given four information screens in addition to the poker table. The first and most important screen is a map of the 24 tables, with nine players to a table. These screens are reduced in number as players are knocked out and tables are combined. On the right side of that screen are two vertical bar graphs. One bar indicates the number of players remaining in the series and the other shows the gamer's relative position in terms of chips. Above the bars are statistics: the day of the tournament, the number of hands played by the player, the number of players remaining, and one's winnings. The second information screen shows the 17 levels with their respective amounts of antes and blinds. At timed intervals, the antes and blinds increase in the World Series until they reach their highest level: a $3,000 ante with blinds of $15,000 and $30,000. Players are less apt to fold their hands when they've had to put up at least $18,000. Two other screens show the prize breakdown for the 36 top finishers and list the rules of No Limit Texas Hold 'em.



Hold 'em is a difficult game to play expertly. Like any card game, luck is involved. But time and again, many of the top finishers in the World Series have been there before because they rely on skill. This computer game closely mimics the top players. "If I hadn't known that a computer was playing these hands," said David Sklansky, author of several books on Hold 'em and a World Series player, "I would have guessed a human was betting them. At least 90 out of 100 of the hands were being played the way a skilled player would bet them."

To sum up: *World Series of Poker Adventure* escorts players in and out of Las Vegas with their wallets left in one piece. The video poker, slot machines and blackjack tables let players experience a casino. Many gamblers shy away from the poker tables because they don't know how to play. Many gamblers who go to the tables lose money because they don't know how to play *properly. World Series of Poker Adventure* can show them how it's done right. And the computer is polite enough to not even chuckle when it rakes in a big pot. CGW

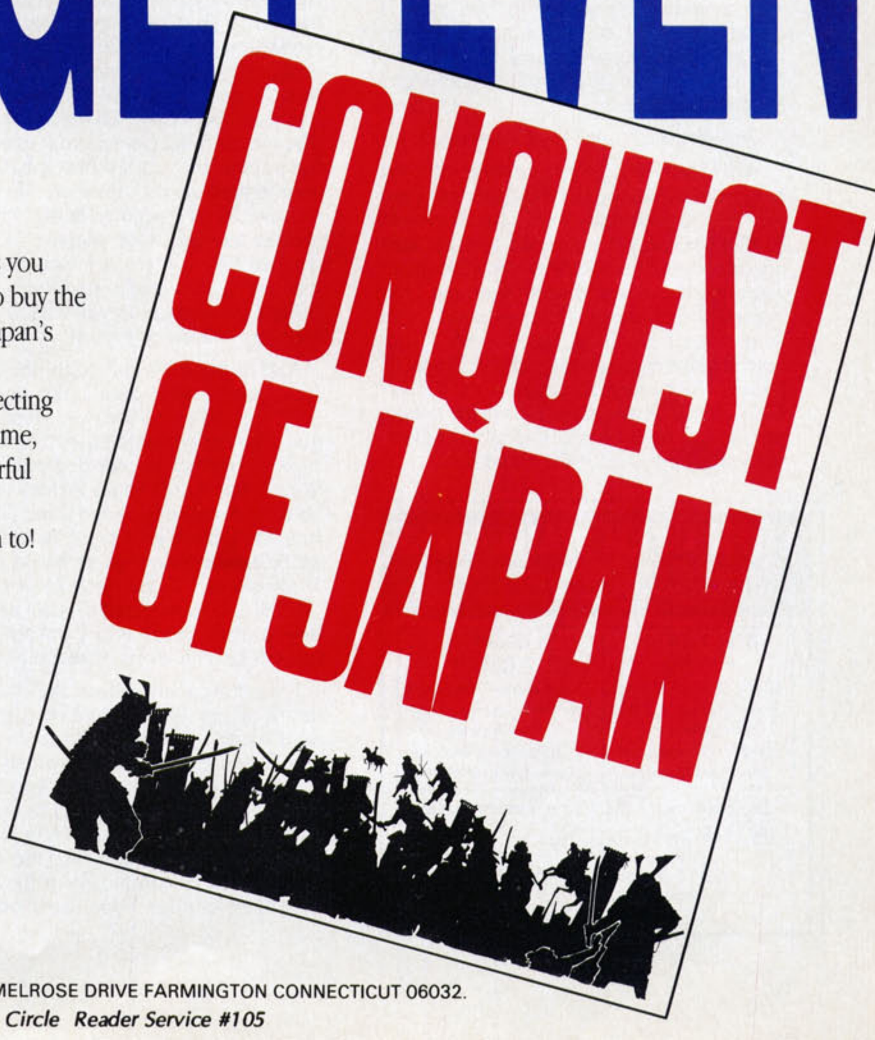
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Circle Reader Service #105

Rumor Guy Expands Base of Support

by H. Ross Stassen

A lot of people will tell you I ran out of money. Other people will tell you I ran out of courage. Who knows why it happens? Sometimes, you just know you have to throw in the towel, whether it's for the good of the country, your family, or even the readers of this magazine. **RAW Entertainment** knew it was time to decide *not* to publish their *Struggle for Guadalcanal* game and I knew it was time to abort my unsuccessful run for the presidency.

It all started when I rushed into my storefront campaign headquarters and passed the "boiler room" of Young Interactive volunteers from the local university who were busy pasting address labels on campaign brochures. I bumped the corner of a desk and was about to spew forth a character string of expletives (to be deleted later) when a reporter came through the door. "No comment!" I quickly substituted for the cathartic cuss words I wanted to enunciate.

In response, a perky, blonde co-ed smiled with an admiring gleam in her eyes. I quickly grabbed one of the brochures she had been labeling and faced the reporter. "Do you know what this is?" I challenged the press thug.

"Prefabricated muck?" he responded.

"No!" I retorted, "It's a pile of dreams: the hopes and aspirations of the American people." He argued that it was the same old stuff. Then, he went over the line. He said my campaign brochure was like a computer game engine that was used over and over again with only the plot lines changed. I said there wasn't anything wrong with a successful game engine being reused. "In fact," I said, "**SSI** plans to develop an *AD&D Gold Box Construction Set* where people can design their own role-playing adventures. That's power to the players!"



Even alien support couldn't save Bagman.

I turned to walk into my office and the reporter issued a challenge to my back. He told me he was writing a story about my skepticism concerning *Wing Commander III* and asked how a cynic like me could justify being a candidate of hope. I pirouetted with the grace of a drunken gorilla and told him the cold, hard truth. "I didn't say *WC3* was not going to come out. I said it would be real difficult for it to come out while Chris Roberts' team is still trying to finish *Strike Commander*. I also said that I had heard from an impeccable, if not improbable source, that **Origin** was doing preliminary design work on a space pirate/space merchant-style game, tentatively called *Trade Commander*. It takes place in the *Wing Commander* universe, but has a completely different emphasis than its counterpart series. Further, *Wing Commander III* is currently being written and should see the store shelves in 1993." I decided not to press my luck and suggest that my source might have been from the *Wing Commander* universe itself. No, best keep my sources to myself.

And to think I had thought the hate mail from people who didn't like my "Rumor Bag" column was vicious. Here was this guy who really wanted to prove me wrong, right in front of my adoring public. You'd think I was Adolf Hitler instead of the lovable old rumor guy. Good thing I didn't tell him that **FormGen** was planning to publish **Id Software**'s new game based on *Castle Wolfenstein 3-D*. Entitled, *Spear of Destiny* ($59.95), it is expected to have new levels, new music, and be more puzzle-intensive (particularly in terms of secret passages).

I went into my office and wearily sat down at my desk. I looked out at those hard-working young volunteers and realized I was tired of being second-guessed. Once the press twisted my words around, how could they be expected to believe, for example, that I knew that **RAW Entertainment**'s *Napoleon* game for the IBM was going to be a completely different game than their current *Napoleon I* on Amiga? Would, in another situation, they believe that I was not "covering up" if **Mindcraft** announced that they were adding modem play to *Siege* and all I knew was that they were seriously considering putting it into the product? Would these bright young minds be disappointed in me if I revealed that **SSI** will be the U.S. publisher of *Legends of Valour* (sneak previewed elsewhere in this issue), even before **SSI** publicly announced the product? Or would that be considered a dirty trick?

Speaking of dirty tricks, I glanced over at the office copy machine where the "covert campaign" unit was supposed to be copying faux position papers, allegedly written by my opponents and outlining absurd proposals which they were, according to our fiction, planning to enact. It turned out the workers were taking a break and making multiple copies of a *White Dwarf* magazine article that had pictures of **Electronic Arts**' upcoming *Space Hulk* computer game. The game is based on the **Games Workshop** role-playing game where players maneuver miniature figures (either Genestealers that look suspiciously like cousins to the film monster in *Alien* or Space Marines assigned to clear the *Space Hulk* of the alien presence) through the corridors and rooms of an aging spaceship. I wondered what my alien source would say about this. Anyway, it's supposed to ship on both IBM and Amiga in December of this year. I thought about telling them it was wrong to copy the magazine article, but then I remembered what kinds of dirty tricks I had recruited them to do for my campaign and turned back to my desk. "Ah, well," I rationalized, "most people will want to see those screen shots in color, anyway."

The phone rang and I picked it up with some trepidation. As I feared, it was yet another reporter. "How do you stand on American jobs going to Canada?" I asked for a clarification. "How do you stand on Canadian companies converting American board games in computer games?"

I suddenly realized that he was talking about **NextWave Software Corporation** and their contract to produce the IBM version of **Avalon Hill**'s *Advanced Third Reich*. I told him that I thought **Avalon Hill** should be congratulated for contracting the game out to an experienced group of IBM programmers. He told me I was unAmerican. UnAmerican? That's worse than being told I write lousy columns. I decided then and there that I was through with politics for good. As for writing lousy columns? Some beings think my writing is out of this world. **CGW**

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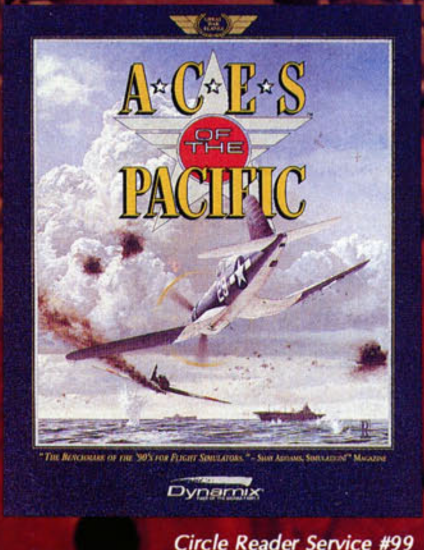




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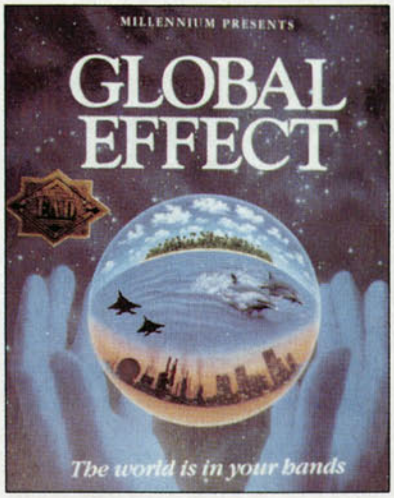
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Global Effect = PC^2

Political Correctness for the Personal Computer

by M. Evan Brooks

NAME:	Global Effect
SYSTEM:	IBM, Amiga
SYSTEM REVIEWED ON:	IBM (386-33)
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$49.95
PUBLISHER:	EA/Millenium
DESIGNER:	Toby Simpson
PROTECTION SCHEME:	Manual Look-Up Scheme



SimCity meets *Sim Earth* meets *Balance of the Planet* and add a touch of *Command HQ* — these are the disparate elements that go into making up **Electronic Arts**' latest release *Global Effect*, a British import, hereafter referred to as *GE*. On first examining the parameters of the product, this reviewer was struck by its appeal — the "world-builder and monitor" aspects were a Johnny Wilson-type attraction and the "two-player modem capability" was an Alan Emrich-type magnet. So, why assign the product to the wargames editor? Does the word "bushwhack" mean anything?

In order to review this simulation, I carefully prepared myself — driving to MacFishy, I purchased a "Dolphin Burger" and ran down a squirrel on my way home. Making sure to discard the non-biodegradable trash on the grass, I was ready (after turning on the air conditioning to maximize the output of flurocarbons). Let the Game Begin!

GE is a world construction/maintenance simulation. It has an "open world" scenario as well as eight pre-designed scenarios (e.g. unstable world, frozen world, mineral rich world, etc.), and that's just for the "Create a World" option. The "Save a World" option offers four different scenarios (post-nuclear, post-industrial, global warming, and natural resource-depleted). "Rule the World" offers two variants — military or industrial.

Don't Believe Everything You Read (Documentation)

The documentation may be summed up as completely and totally insufficient. Other comments may be added such as misleading, sparse and downright incorrect. The construction tools are explained, but a much-needed tutorial is lacking. Cause-and-effect explanations are left to the player to determine from his/her own experience or lack thereof.

In fact, some of the documentation is just plain wrong. In explaining the use of solar power, the documentation notes that it can power up to 25 city blocks. In game play, I found that a 1:1 relationship between solar panels and city blocks was mandatory in order to avoid power outages (at least until technological investment increased its efficiency). Similarly, we are informed that sewage farms "are needed near large cities." *Actually*, they are needed in *any* city, and more importantly, the sewage farm must be *physically adjacent* to a city block (haven't the designers ever heard of pipelines?). If this is not done, the population will decrease from disease, thereby leading to a fatal dose of coprophagy. This essential information was revealed by an EA technical representative who pointed out that recycling plants are "stand alone" and therefore, the documentation *meant* "immediately adjacent" when it referred to "nearness" for sewage plants. Ahh, the subtleness of those British designers when it comes to semantics! (As the misanthropic cynic once observed, we are two peoples "... separated by a common language.")

In terms of "Environmental Effects," the documentation says that this "section is purposely scarse [sic], in order for the game to be more difficult" (page 74). The manual is correct — it is scarce, and inexcusably so. The game is difficult enough without the designer having to obscure the operating parameters. The fatuous explanation for its brevity is completely unsatisfying, unless one is a masochist.

This simulation showed a great potential, but its manual documentation would force the user into an arduous and unnecessarily difficult learning experience.

It's Got The Look (Graphics)

The graphics are well done. City blocks expand on their own initiative (and must be carefully controlled by the player in order to avoid bankruptcy). Power refineries and storage facilities are clearly delineated, and the open gas flames pouring from oil "cracking" refineries add to the local color. The perspective is an overhead view *a la SimCity*. The construction tools are logically defined and drawn (e.g. batteries for energy-producing power, reservoir-type facilities for energy storage).

On the screen itself, one can view the playing area, as well as two smaller graphs (environmental balance and global warming). These graphs must be carefully monitored as the smallest deviation could set a fatal trend.

Special options allow environmental detailed data reports (which again cost power to access), as well as obtain seismic reports (essential for determining the location of oil, coal and other natural resources).

Blueprint for a Better World (Game Mechanics)

A "look-up" protection scheme requires the user to match four geometric shapes with an icon. Only then will the game actually begin to load — which presents a problem. There is no provision to quit a game and begin another; one must go through the entire tedious process again.

Unlike *SimCity*, where the construction tools were physically on

the screen, *GE* uses a "Tool Selection" window. There are thirty building tools which are arranged in a continuous strip, and one merely scrolls through the list.

It looks simple, but elegant, until one begins to play. Since the game occurs in real time, the player's attempt to find a much-needed tool could well be accomplished in an "untimely" fashion. One can create "user-friendly" macros; simply select a tool, press down the shift key and then select a function key. That tool is now called up by the function key; thus, one can have up to twelve short cuts. I recommend that the following tools be used in macro-mode: plant trees, chop trees, destroy man-made block, city limit, power cables, pipelines, city block. Beware! The macro functions are not saved to disk and must be reset every game. Sometimes, the "tool selection" process goes awry and the strip just scrolls continuously. At other times, no matter what one's desires may actually be, merely placing the cursor on the map causes the program to immediately construct whatever icon has been selected before the player wants or desires any action, thereby assisting in one's rapid energy depletion.

City blocks can self-generate, but when one fine-tunes the environment, he will want to place the city block in a planned location. Pipelines and power cables are probably the most important macros to set. Of course, each player should develop his own preferences (and make a written list of what those preferences are).



A rather unusual game mechanic is TANSTAAFL ("there ain't no such thing as a free lunch"). One lives and dies based on power, but everything costs power — even scrolling the map! To get a report, to see a map — nothing is free. This becomes frustrating when a problem occurs and the player has no way of moving to the troubled area.



GE would seem to be pre-set for modem play and in fact, the documentation notes how to set up a null modem cable for play. However, the manual recommends *against* telephone modem play. So much data is transferred that self-correcting protocols have not been used, and anytime the modem would pause to recalculate line speeds, the game would crash. The manual goes on to say that "the modem facility is present, but use it with care." Right!! That gives a player confidence!

Slim Earth (Game Play)

There *is* a real game in the box. Unlike *SimCity*, which has been described as a "software toy," *GE* possesses game playing, competitive elements. It resembles the oft-told story of the boy opening up a present on Christmas Day only to find it full of horse manure. The boy smiles, because he "knows that there's a pony in here, somewhere."

Most scenarios begin with a major, albeit concealed, problem; unless the player takes rapid action, the entire world will enter a fatal ice age within fifty years. This is not mentioned in the documentation and immediate action *must* be taken for survival. Actually, any minor deviation from global "norms" seem to rapidly escalate into life-threatening crises which then take years to correct. There is no friendly GAIA model underlying this ecosystem as in the simpler levels of *SimEarth*.

The discussion herein is based on the "Green Field Scenario," ostensibly a one-player scenario. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels rapidly decrease after a small hole appears in the polar ice cap ecosphere. 'Why?' is not explained or discernible, but unless one takes quick action, the game will end by year 55.

Using the default planet settings is a road to extinction. Pump up the coal/mineral reserves, and immediately build coal-powered cities. Power is minimal, so only one mine should be developed. The city should be powered by three ugly belching coal power plants, sufficient to pollute their way into a CO_2 surfeit. Cities themselves should be carefully constructed; allowing the AI to expand a city is also fatal. Each city should be carefully defined by "City Limits" and trees as to minimize power consumption. Once the power plant appears, cities begin their own growth unless controlled. Therefore, have service tools (farms, sewage and recycling facilities) present before bringing the power station on-line. Keep the city small; a total area of 15 blocks should be more than sufficient.

The cities should be blocked in by trees. However, a one tree depth will often prove insufficient. If a tree "fell in the forest" and the player was elsewhere, his return to the site would find a city growing and using power in an aggressive and game-losing manner. Use a three-to-six tree depth for blocking in cities. This gives an ecological bonus by increasing one's power rating. After the CO_2 levels stabilize, plant more trees and convert to nuclear fuels. The NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) syndrome does not exist, so nuclear plants in the midst of urban centers will yield no negatives beyond the occasional "melt-down" — and, given the plethora of global disasters present, such a "melt-down" is a "minor" problem. By the time one converts to nuclear energy, power levels are not a problem, so one can invest in technology for "natural" energy sources. It is expensive, but necessary for longer-term survival.

Now, we have a basic scenario which kills the player without fair warning. But, *if* one wishes to continue, there are computer opponents. While the manual notes that they are "very capable," this reviewer played a military option only to find that the computer opponent had expired by year ten all by himself. Maybe he knew something about the coming Ice Age and couldn't be bothered with short-term conflict? The military option seems to be a virtual afterthought and one which again is poorly documented.

There are other points of confusion. As the Ice Age comes to its inevitable and fatal conclusion, one is rewarded with a picture of nuclear devastation. Either the ice is radioactive or else the program has another "minor" flaw. I suppose that the military conflict portion can be interesting; I suppose that the ecological protection can be interesting. However, with the flaws and traps for the unwary player, *caveat emptor*.

Special attention should be paid to the placement of pipelines and power lines. They are not allowed to cross one another, and the more egregious error would be to place the pipeline between a water treatment plant and a sewage facility too close to one another; they would loop and create either very bad water or over-cleaned sewage; in either case, not the most effective use of assets.

Making a Sow's Ear out of a Silk Purse (Conclusions)

GE has all the elements of a mega-success — it is interesting, well-conceived and possesses depth. However, it is a "diamond in the rough" and appears unfinished. If the manual had been more complete, if the interface had been made more user-friendly, if the scenarios themselves were more forgiving, if, if, if...

A lifetime member of the Sierra Club with a Ph.D. in ecological engineering might have the drive and stamina to delve into the mechanics and playability of this product. As for the rest of us, *Global Effect* is closer to *SimChernobyl* than to *SimCity*. CGW

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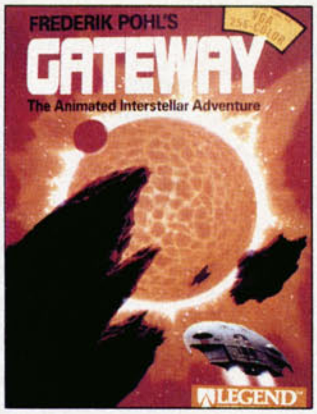
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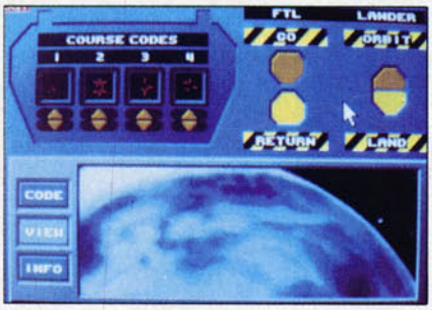
Pohl Position:

by Charles Ardai

TITLE	Gateway
SYSTEM:	IBM (640K, Hard disk)
PROTECTION:	None
PRICE:	$59.95
DESIGNERS:	Mike Verdu, Duane Beck, Mike Linder, Glen Dahlgren, Bob Bates
DISTRIBUTOR:	Accolade, San Jose, CA

Science fiction writer Frederik Pohl has won acclaim through the years for transcending the apparent limits of his genre. He mixed science fiction and fantasy; he told stories about aliens who were plausible extraterrestrials, not rampaging, bug-eyed monsters; he wrote about ecological threats long before it was fashionable (and has continued to do so, with great conviction, now that it is); and he wrote fun, pulpy adventures without abandoning the core of scientific verisimilitude that makes the best sf come alive.

Pohl is not the only writer who did these things, of course. All the greats did, first in the pages of magazines such as *Astounding*



and *Amazing*, then later in dime paperbacks, and most recently in hardcover bestsellers. However, it is important to put Pohl in the same category as the other greats — Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein, Bradbury — where he belongs.

Part of being up there with the giants of the field, it seems, is having one's works adapted to various non-literary entertainment media. Heinlein, Bradbury and Clarke all saw their novels turned into interactive fiction by **Telarium**; Asimov's robot novels were the basis for a text adventure from **Epyx** and a VCR game from **Kodak**; and now, at last, Fred Pohl has his turn in the spotlight, courtesy of **Legend Entertainment**, publisher of the popular *Spellcasting* series (and, arguably, the best publisher of "old-style" interactive fiction currently active).

Gateway is based on Pohl's award-winning Heechee novels, which tell of a future in which humans happen upon the artifacts of a long-vanished alien race and, though they know almost nothing about the aliens, learn to use the artifacts for their own enrichment. In the humans' favor is the fact that Heechee spaceships are very easy-to-use, having pre-programmed destinations and simple controls. Unfortunately, no one knows what these destinations are or what one might find at them. So, traveling in a Heechee ship is like a game of cosmic Russian Roulette: you pays your money and you takes your chances.

Some (most) missions end in fiery destruction. Others produce limitless riches in the form of new Heechee technology. The risks are high but, since the rewards are higher, there is no shortage of foolhardy adventurers ready to give interstellar prospecting a shot.

In *Gateway*, the player takes on the role of one of these foolhardy adventurers, a lucky soul who, having won a lottery, now has the wherewithal to buy a ticket to the Gateway space station, where a thousand Heechee ships are docked. From there, the player has two responsibilities: going on prospecting missions to recover any valuable technology he can, and staying alive. Both are as difficult as they sound.

Once the player has proven himself by going on a number of successful missions, a third duty is introduced: the player has to go on a secret mission for the officers of Gateway, traveling to five planets and turning on long-dormant Heechee force-field generators to shield humanity from the gaze of evil aliens known as the Assassins. In the meantime, just to keep things interesting, a number of mysterious subplots unfold on the space station itself and between missions, the player has to take time out to investigate these. Finally, when the generators are all activated, the player returns to Gateway expecting a hero's welcome. Instead, he faces his oddest challenge yet: a surreal showdown in a series of Assassin-created virtual realities. The game's final twist is not the shocker it would like to be, and will not surprise anyone who has seen the movie *Total Recall*, but it still packs a punch.

Pohl's influence is felt throughout the game: in the plotting, in the slang used by various characters, in the "hard sf" feel of the station and the spaceships, and in the bits of exposition that creep into the game here and there. The heart of *Gateway*, however, is the series of puzzles the player has to solve while seeking out strange new worlds and new civilizations, and these puzzles owe less to Fred Pohl than to the last decade of adventure game design. Except for a handful of puzzles centered around the fad of the moment, virtual reality, most would not be out of place in a golden oldie such as *Starcross* or *Planetfall*. (The puzzles are, for the most part, pretty good. It's just that, like the story, they feel as though they date from an earlier era.)

In addition to the puzzles, the storyline, and the cachet of Pohl's name, *Gateway* offers an excellent and varied soundtrack, good graphics and a couple of nice animated sequences. The game even comes with a hint book and maps for the benefit of players apt to make use of such aids. The only thing lacking, in fact, is the one accessory one would like most: a copy of one of Pohl's novels, to help players delve deeper into the Heechee mythos once they are hooked on it. Fortunately, there's always Barnes & Noble.

The Way of the Heechee

Gateway looks and plays essentially the same as all previous **Legend** games. There is a graphics window, a text window and a number of "assistance" windows such as a compass rose indicating directions in which the player can move, a list of verbs the player can use, a list of objects, and quick-click buttons for some commonly issued commands. These "windows" are not windows in the sense of being movable and alterable in any substantial way. They are simply an arrangement of information on the screen intended to be optimally useful.

The most important and useful, of course, is the text window. I found myself ignoring the rest for large stretches of the game. A player who doesn't like to type might find the word-lists helpful, but they still strike me as an exceptionally cumbersome technique for building command sentences. The compass rose is nice and the graphics are good; these windows, at least, provide useful amenities. However, *amenities* describes exactly what they provide. *Gateway*

Legend's *Gateway*

is essentially a text adventure with amenities.

The game also has a few other command screens which one encounters whenever one uses some technological device, Heechee or otherwise. Flying a spaceship, for instance, requires one to enter course codes into a control panel, as does opening a Heechee dome on one planet. There are also special screens for the trivia game in the Gateway casino and one's "Dataman" personal computer. These screens, along with the full-screen closeups that are sometimes used when an important conversation is taking place, give the game a little more visual variety than it would otherwise have.

There are three kinds of puzzles in the game: puzzles of interaction, situational puzzles, and logic puzzles. The first type mainly comes up when one has to meet with, and get something from, one's fellow prospectors on Gateway. There is a bit of tedious waiting around for people to show up ("I'll meet you in the bar at 20:00," "The briefing is at 8:45") and more than a bit of not knowing just what to say to keep these people talking. (A lot of conversations involve typing "wait" or "listen" over and over.) Some of the conversations require skill to navigate, though, and most are well-written. Editing would have made them shorter and shorter would have been better (because some characters do ramble on), but for the most part the interactive puzzles are fine.

Situational puzzles are ones which require the player to do something with the tools at his disposal in order to overcome an obstacle. The puzzles on Kaduna 3 and Nemira 3 are of this variety and they are quite good. How does one get past the venomous, inflated pufferslug that is blocking access to the shield generator or cross the alien-infested swamp? How can one get the cylinder out of the alien's hut without waking him up? The solutions do not always make a great deal of sense (such as the odd puzzles involving a tuning fork), but most are fine.

The weakest puzzles in the game are the logic puzzles in which the designers indulge much too frequently. Which symbol in a row of five does not belong? What color flag goes in which opening of the Heechee machine? Which path should one follow through the maze of rooms painted with the colors of the spectrum? Puzzles like these do not proceed from the situations in the game; they are pure abstractions, a holdover from the days when adventure games were less interactive fiction than they were extensions of the puzzle page of *Scientific American*. In *Gateway*, they seem jarring and inappropriate. It doesn't help that they are all painfully simple, too much like breadcrumbs in a too-small meatloaf, trying desperately to act as "stretchers."

Heechee Weaknesses

There is a reason that the designers of *Gateway* might have decided that they needed stretchers. Though it takes a long time to get through the game, a lot of this is because of time used up in navigating the station and flying around in the spaceships. Each alien planet, once one arrives, consists of only six to sixteen locations. The space station itself only has three levels, none of which is especially extensive. The game may not feel small, but it is, and if it doesn't feel small, it is because it is puzzle-rich. It is a pity, though, that the designers' solution to making the game puzzle-rich was to throw in a lot of easy, throwaway puzzles.

Even worse are the shameless and annoying stall tactics that are used to make the game longer. Every time one wants to go on a mission, for instance, one has to exit one's spaceship, show a badge to an agent, enter the ship, close the hatch, put on a spacesuit, sit down, program a course code painstakingly (in the illegible Heechee alphabet) into the computer, launch, sit through the same launch animation, orbit, sit through the same landing animation and land.

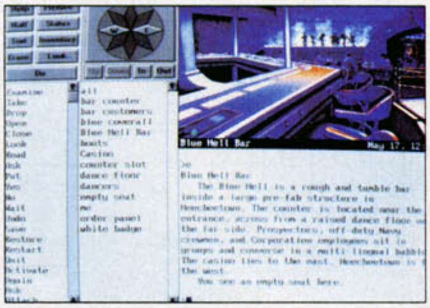
The first time one goes through this sequence, it is fun: the animations are good and the activities are not yet repetitive. The second time one is put through the paces, it is already less fun. By the sixth or seventh time, most players will be climbing the walls and pressing the space bar to cut the animations short. Frankly, I just cannot believe that it is good game design to force the player to engage in long sequences by rote. Once the player has gotten through the sequences a couple of times, the program should create a new and much shorter segue to replace the animated obstacle course.

When one gets to the planets one finds them all well drawn, but not strikingly so: one gets swamps, forests, jungles and all the other usual terrain. Further, the music that accompanies the various scenes is very good, but this may not be a good thing. Music is the last thing I want in a text adventure, since it distracts from the text and, indeed, prevents me from immersing myself in the story. I found myself constantly trying to read faster to keep up with the music. *[Ed: After polling the editorial staff, we discovered that there is a tremendous polarization on this issue. Some people like background music when they are reading. Others don't. The latter will not enjoy soundtracks behind their text adventures.]* Sound effects are good but spotty: sometimes the game says "You hear an alien scream," but sometimes it actually produces the scream and it is never really clear why it does one rather than the other.

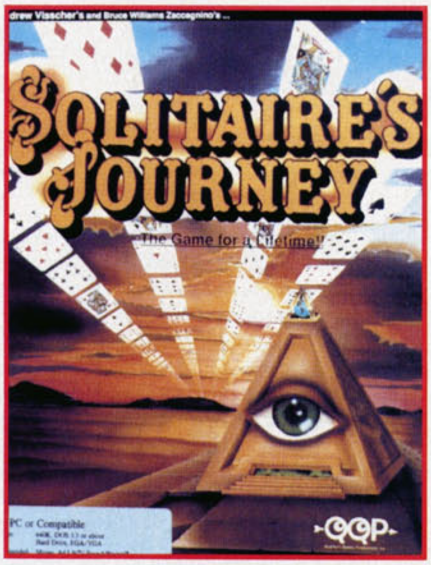
Maybe most distressing are the elements of the story that go undeveloped. In principle, there is supposed to be a risk involved in being a Gateway prospector; prospectors are supposed to die more often than they are supposed to succeed. Granted, one doesn't want to die constantly in a game, but the fact is that it is possible (if one programs the course codes correctly) never to be in any danger at all. This seems to directly contradict the premise of the game. Then, too, one is amassing great wealth as a result of one's successes, but the financial side of the game is completely ignored. There is nothing to buy except drinks for one's comrades, so the millions just pile up, an end in themselves.

Closing the Gateway

Gateway is a good enough game, but good enough for what? It is certainly playable. It is generally entertaining. It takes place in an interesting universe and is well plotted. Yet nothing about the game makes



it compelling; nothing makes it feel fresh, different, or new. Just as it is full of filler puzzles, it is a filler game, treading water in the shallows of interactive fiction. Pohl is well served by the game, which is faithful and respectful to his work. Players, unfortunately, are less well served, and *Gateway* will most likely join *Rendezvous With Rama*, *Fahrenheit 451* and their like in a dusty corner of adventure game history. CGW



TITLE:	Solitaire's Journey
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	Documentation Look-Up
DESIGNERS:	Andrew Visscher Bruce Williams Zaccagnino
PUBLISHER:	QQP Flemington, NJ

Journey to the Center of the Mind

QQP's *Solitaire's Journey*

by Allen L. Greenberg

Buried deep within the shadowy recreation department of humanity's collective unconscious, lies a primal urge to seek diversion and entertainment using the most mundane of objects. A deck of cards easily fulfills this need, as do many computational devices. After careful study, recreationologists have actually been able to document the amazing efforts of primitive mathematicians to run a respectable game of *Hunt The Wumpus* on an abacus! Even more astounding is the method by which these ancient hackers were able to "download" the program, using only campfires and bongo-drums. That these early efforts at computer gaming remained unknown to historians for so long is now attributed to an obscure sect of abacus programmers whose name roughly translates as "the origin." Managing to confuse and confound other engineers of their day, this group had apparently become obsessed with the fear that their species would fail to climb the evolutionary ladder unless they immediately began using abacuses equipped with increasingly large numbers of available beads.

While one may choose to question these facts concerning ancient abacus gaming, our knowledge of the history of playing cards remains nearly as limited. It was not until the 19th century that the rules for solitaire, or "patience", were actually recorded. The earliest 14th century references to this popular diversion may be summarized in one word — "Don't!" Considering the game's high addiction potential, this attitude may not have been unreasonable. It has been conservatively estimated that there are at least 350 variations of solitaire being played throughout the world today. Of these, the best known is "Klondike" (often mistakenly referred to as "Canfield") and it is this game which has most frequently been adapted for play on a computer. Klondike, Canfield and a number of other variations have previously been bundled into several commercial packages available for PCs. With the release of **QQP**'s *Solitaire's Journey* (*Journey*), a whopping 105 solitaire games are now available in one package — over twice the number of variations which have ever been marketed in any other such software product.

The structuring and setup of a solitaire card game is well-known. For most games, cards are dealt from a stock-pile onto a tableau where they are put in a special order and, finally, placed on a foundation from which the final score is tallied. This happens according to a set of rules which range from brief and simple to mind-taxingly difficult. In addition, each variation also features a unique blending of luck and strategy. Each game is played with either one or two 52-card decks, so that a maximum score of either 52 or 104 points is possible. However, *Journey* also provides for additional realms of conquest by organizing clusters of games into tournaments, quests and journeys. Meticulous records and statistics are maintained for each individual who uses the program. This will prove useful not only for establishing healthy competition between large numbers of players, but also for employers who are looking to estimate the number of pay-hours to deduct from office personnel who are unable to resist favoring this activity over their assigned chores.

A mouse is strongly recommended for playing *Journey*, with which the player first points to the card or cards to be moved and then to a destination. Use of the keyboard is also possible, but is somewhat clumsy. Using pull-down menus, *Journey* allows for several options during play. Perhaps the most useful of these is the ability to take back one move at any time during the game. There is also an "auto-play" function which will move to the foundation any cards from the tableau which may legally be transferred. The value of this is that once a victory has been assured, the player is spared the effort of moving one card at a time. This is certainly useful, though it may turn out to be a strategic error if used too early during the game. At any time, a game may be restarted using either the same sequence of cards — so that the player may go back and attempt a different strategy — or a newly shuffled deck. Games in progress may be saved to disk, but these are erased once they are reloaded into memory. Peeking under piles of cards, cheating, or altering the rules are all strictly prohibited by the program. Loudly voiced profanities are not restricted, although **QQP** apparently does not accept responsibility for the consequences should the player be moved to use them.

The instructions for each of the 105 games are available at all times from a pull-down menu, and appear as a series of information windows. A quick illustration of the game's layout is followed by an optional, slightly more detailed description of how the player is to proceed. For the most part, anyone who has ever played Klondike solitaire should have very little trouble following these descriptions. However, there are a few cases where these rules may be slightly confusing, and a less condensed description is desirable. Unfortunately, the game's manual, where one might hope to find such a description, turns out to include exactly the same sentences as those which appear in the program itself.

Tournaments, quests and journeys bring together different clusters of the individual games. Tournaments include up to ten games, the simple object of which is to obtain the highest total score. Each participant, however, is given a different shuffling of the cards, so that players are clearly not competing under the same conditions. The program contains several tournaments which group together games based on level of difficulty. The user also has the option of bundling together any of the 105 games in order to stage a tournament of his or her own design.

For a "journey," the player is presented with a map of North America from which a cross-country route is selected. Moving from city to city, a monetary reward is given for each point earned in the solitaire games found at the various locations. Cities are each assigned a level of difficulty, and the player often has some choice as to which cities to avoid or pass through. At journey's

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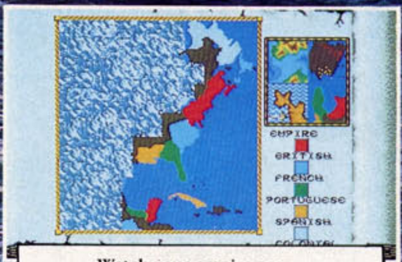
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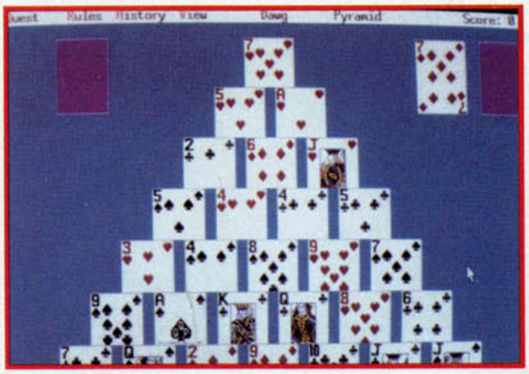
Impressions

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end, additional points are assigned for completing the tour in the least number of days. The goal is to bring in enough cash to cover travel expenses, as well as show a sizable profit at the end of the trip.

Quests take place inside a building. An architect's view displays an entrance, a series of rooms and either an exit or a staircase leading to another level. In each room are a pile of gold bars as well as a choice of three solitaire games. Entrance to any of the rooms is forbidden until one of the three games is played. Some passages are also blocked by locked doors, the keys to which are found elsewhere in the building. Some rooms may also contain bonus gold. The goal here is to collect a required number of gold bars while passing through the least number of rooms on the way to the exit. While there are rewards for winning the individual games in both the quests and the journeys, it is only necessary to achieve a certain number of points in order for a game to be considered a success.



Journey's sounds and graphics are competently produced. There are several card designs available, as well as a variety of screen background colors and patterns. Likewise, there are also a number of simple tunes which may be selected to accompany game-play. The music is somewhat repetitive, however, and it is difficult to imagine that anyone could concentrate on the game while hearing *Journey*'s hurried boogie-woogie signature theme. The slower music, played at low volume, creates a more conducive, almost subliminally tranquil, effect.

Composing a "wish-list" for future *Journeys* is difficult to resist. As already mentioned, a manual which includes a less condensed set of rules, along with some game-specific strategy hints, would have been very much appreciated. Some players will also doubtlessly crave a peek-and-cheat mode — an option which has been available to solitaire players throughout its non-computerized existence. There is only one, brief "reward" animation sequence which is shown each time the player wins one of the 105 games. Given the obsessive attachment some players will develop towards certain of these games, a large variety of congratulatory messages would greatly enhance the fun, with the most elaborate of these held in reserve for the most difficult games. Obviously, the delight of these rewards should be denied the peekers and cheaters, should these suggestions be put into effect.

Among the astonishing facts which may now be added to the journals of recreationology is that **QQP** admits to having played "tens of thousands" of solitaire games in order to provide an average, realistic score for each of the 105 variations in their package. May we assume that is "tens of thousands" of games for which **QQP**'s employees were paid? Given the current minimum wage, and the nature of the work involved, it is difficult not to conclude that **QQP** now receives a dizzyingly high number of employment applications. Until funding for this type of research becomes more plentiful, it is likely that the rest of the world will simply have to purchase *Journey* and pursue their research independently. Even under these circumstances, *Journey* will prove an effective way of satisfying that primal appetite for entertainment. CGW

DIVING IN THE KEYS OF SEA

Sea Rogue Strategy

by T. Liam McDonald

Thomas Liam McDonald is the author of Sun Tzu's Ancient Art of Golf *(Contemporary Books, November, with Gary Chapin), and the forthcoming projects:* Myths to Golf By *(humor),* UNIX for the Kingdom of Heaven, *a biography of Peter Straub, and* The Grand Scams.





MicroPlay's *Sea Rogue* starts players on the road to salvage riches with only a rickety little trawler, a few pieces of bottom-of-the-line equipment, and a crew that's only as loyal as the last payroll is timely. The prospects are not great for one to succeed, but, with the right purchases and moves, success is attainable. *Sea Rogue* is a nautical role-playing adventure with a light combat element added for an extra (though actually pretty minimal) challenge. The first step of the game is to generate a crew, which is comprised of a Captain (the player), Weapons/Diving Officer, Sensor Officer, Communications Officer and Engineering Officer. Each has his or her own station and duties. Automatically generated numbers define an individual's attributes (Dexterity, Wisdom, Intelligence, Charisma, Loyalty, Endurance), and bonus points can be allocated for such things as Wreck Research, Diving, Treasure Appraisal, Underwater Combat, etc. As one succeeds in uncovering wrecks, one's crew members gain points which, in turn, can be added to the required skills at various ports of call.

Since, most of the time, only four members of the crew will be diving, it is best to choose up front which four this will be, and allocate diving points appropriately. The captain's major strengths should lie primarily in his Treasure Appraisal and Diplomacy (later, Safecracker skills are crucial); the Weapons/Diving Officer, in Combat, Evasion and Ordnance Handling; the Sensor Officer, in Signature Recognition; the Navigation Officer in Treasure Maps; the Communications Officer in Wreck Identification; and the Engineering Officer in Repair Equipment and, to a lesser degree, Damage Control. Diving and Underwater combat points should then be added to each of the four crew members who shall be on the diving team. It is also important to add Wreck Research to the entire crew, since this will determine one's potential for success in finding new wrecks when going to the library for research.

Once the ship is fully crewed, the real play begins. Of the three levels (novice, intermediate and professional), only the last two involve extended combat. So, it is best to start as a novice. After a certain number of wrecks, successful players will be bumped up to intermediate and professional anyway, and in the novice level one has some decent time in which to earn enough money to trade in that leaking trawler for a spiffy new research craft. Ultimately, this will lead to the purchase of the Sea Rogue itself: a high-tech submersible that allows one to go after modern wrecks, including the Titanic and the Bismarck.

The main struggle in the early part of the game is fuel management. One launches from North Carolina with 300 units of fuel and the coordinates of a wreck off the coast of Florida. The basic tactic is to get to the location and uncover the wreck inch by inch, avoiding the use of explosives for excavation at all costs, especially early on. Different countries will be scrutinizing the player's character as play begins and building a strong archaeological rating early on is an important factor in keeping them off his/her back. In the novice level, one must arm the first diver with a speargun (for sharks) and the other three with metal detectors or two metal detectors and a sandsucker. (The sandsucker increases the number of squares a diver can uncover.) In the more advanced modes, where enemy divers present a particular problem, an additional diver should be armed with a knife or speargun.

Once on the ocean floor, one should go to the overview map in order to see the shape of the debris as it lies in the silt. Not all the treasure will be located within the body of the ship: some will have been thrown free. So, to use the time most efficiently, it is best to scour inside and beneath the wooden beams, then in a constantly increasing radius. If any sea chests or ballast stones are visible on the surface, it is always a good idea to excavate around and below them. Chances are more treasure is in the vicinity. One must, of course, beware of mines and not try to dig beneath them. Astute readers will wonder how this reviewer knows it doesn't work.

Divers should be ordered to cover every square within the wreck site with the metal detectors. Though most encrusted items can be found with the detector, gems usually cannot. As the game progresses and the player's character has 30 or so wrecks under his/her belt, the captain will probably feel less inclined to go over the site square-by-square. In such a case,



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one should opt for the vacuum method. This, however, creates two problems: 1) it keeps players from being able to look at the ship's bell (often the key to identifying a wreck) and 2) causes one to *definitely* miss some of the treasure. Once the decision for a method of recovery is made, it cannot be changed, so it is important to have the Communications Officer attempt a Manual Identify before the method of recovery is chosen.

Several things aid one in double-checking this identification before accepting it. (And, since the officer's identification is usually wrong, especially early on, it is best to double-check.) First, take the geographical location into consideration. That automatically narrows down the field of search. Then, on the first trip down, counting the number of cannons on the ship can be a vital clue. Some are iron, some are bronze. The bronze cannons are more rare, so if there are any present, that narrows the possibilities further. The dates of the coins and the cannons are the exact date of the wreck, which for many excavations is enough to determine the name of the wreck. When there is more than one wreck from the same year in the same area, the types and combinations of artifacts brought up are key to identification. Several ships may have muskets listed on their manifests, for example, but only one may have carried muskets and religious artifacts. So, to get full value for one's effort, it is necessary to identify the wreck carefully, at least until one has the $50,000,000 for the Wreck Identification Computer.

Okay. With a cargo-bay full of gold, silver, jewels and artifacts, even the name of the ship it all came from, it only takes a quick trip to the captain's cabin to appraise said treasure, find the nearest port of call that has an artifact society or nautical museum and sell the treasure to them. They buy the treasure and the bank deposits the gold and silver. So, it is time for another assignment. Where to go? The tavern, of course! Buy a drink (it helps the game, really), have a few words with the bartender and talk to the patrons. This might take a couple tries, maybe even a couple of drinks, but sooner or later someone always offers to sell a map. Buy them all! Period. None are fake.

It is also possible to encounter someone who knows a little something about a wreck. These people are useful and they keep popping up throughout the game, each time with another clue to a wreck sight. These are filed in the captain's archives. Wise players pay attention to them! Also, if there's a library in a given port, it is worthwhile to spend a week researching wrecks. Until players build some decent Wreck Research points, it will mostly be hit and miss. It's also a very good idea to hire several different researchers. It's hard to track whether they are being useful or not, but later on they'll all be hired out, and players who failed to hire them will definitely regret not having a few scattered about the world.

Financial management is crucial to this game, particularly in the initial phase. If a captain can manage to steer clear of storms, he/she won't have to repair the ship, which keeps those expenses down. Still, one must have a constant supply of fuel. Hence, one's first purchases (see chart for locations) should be a fuel efficiency device and cargo bay extenders. The former allows the ship to sail further on less fuel and the latter is for those particularly large hauls. These will "follow" the player during upgrades, so one should not hesitate to purchase them as early as possible. One cautionary word,

TABLE OF PORTS

PORT	NAUTICAL NED'S	BLACK MARKET BOB'S	RESEARCH WRECKS	SELL TREASURE
San Juan	N	N	SRI	N
Panama	N	N	SRI	N
Cuba	N	Y	N	N
Miami	Y	Y	N	Y
Nassau	N	Y	SRI Library	N
Norfolk*	Y	N	SRI	Y
New York	N	N	SRI	Y
Boston	N	N	SRI Library	Y
Bermuda	N	Y	SRI Library	N
Dakar	N	N	SRI	N
Casablanca	N	Y	SRI	Y
Rota	N	N	Library	Y
Lisbon	Y	N	N	Y
La Corona	N	N	SRI Library	Y
Brest	N	N	SRI	Y
Dublin	N	N	SRI	N
Southampton	N	N	SRI Library	Y
Edinburgh	Y	N	SRI	N
Reykjavek	Y	N	N	N

SRI—Seafarers Research Institute
*—Repairs can be made here

however, don't over-purchase equipment too early. It is possible to run out of money to pay the crew. Therefore, one should try not to buy too much else (except fuel) until enough money is put aside for the research vessel. The next step should be a map decoding computer (essential!), communications decoding module and hull reinforcements. As enemies enter the picture and one becomes captain of the Sea Rogue itself, the bulk of one's financial resources will be spent on torpedoes, decoys and other offensive/defensive purchases. This reviewer has yet to find the U.S.G.S. mineral detector even marginally useful, but who knows?

Careful players will get the Sea Rogue sooner than they expect, thus allowing them to go after the modern wrecks with the probe. Then, it is wise to stock up on hull-cutter torch bars, just in case. An extra probe might also be nice. Further, when given a choice where to start, choose the purser's office or the captain's cabin: there are usually safes here. Steer clear of cargo bays where it looks like ordnance may be stored. Probes do, after all, blow up. Finally, watch the battery very carefully. If it runs out, one is out of luck as well as electricity.

A lot of the modern wrecks aren't nearly as profitable as the wooden ones. Many have already been excavated. Still, the ultimate goal is for the big, famous modern wrecks (which will only become available to one after the first hundred have been recovered). A player just might send that probe down into just another cargo ship, only to discover that he/she is "dancing" in the ballroom of the Titanic. CGW


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Towering Observations On Tolkien:

by Allen L. Greenberg

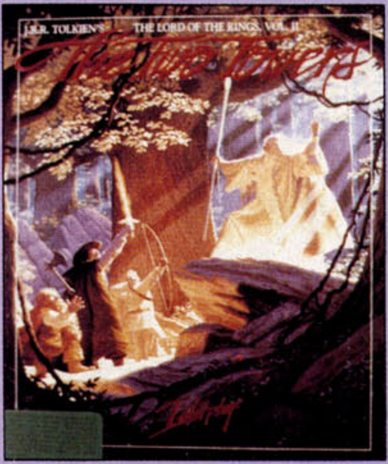
TITLE:	The Two Towers
SYSTEM:	IBM, Amiga coming in fall
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	Documentation Based
PUBLISHER:	Interplay
	Santa Ana, CA

"It is impossible to look at the mythical perfection of Middle Earth, its legendary conflicts and unforgettable characters, and not ask oneself, 'Where is the theme park?' True literary immortality resides not on the printed page but, rather, in the bloated costumes worn by actors waiting to greet middle class parents with their children's chocolate-covered fingers in one hand and a credit card in the other! Does 1992 not mark the centenary of J.R.R. Tolkien's birth? Where, then, are the action dolls? Is Bilbo Baggins not, at least, as archetypal a figure as GI Joe? Furthermore, why have these creatures not found their way into a breakfast cereal? Need that most important of supermarket shelves be completely ignored by the sucrose-hungry masses to whom hobbits and elves are as the stars themselves? Love of a fictional character is not found in the hearts of its readers but, rather, in the amount the parents of those readers are willing to spend on a worthless item bearing that character's image! Most shocking of all, what pacifistic pauper is producing the computer and video games? Has no one considered the intellectuals whose trigger-fingers ache to blast the Balrog, waste the Wargs, toast the Towers..."

– excerpt from a recent issue of the Journal of the Society for Creatively Unethical Money Making (S.C.U.M.M.).

Such ravings serve as a reminder that the forces of evil are infinite. For J.R.R. Tolkien, having reached the middle section of his vast tale while living under the threat of Nazi Germany, Middle Earth was rapidly becoming the victim of a powerful corruption which would dearly test the heroic nature of his characters. This over-powering sense of supernatural gloom and despair in an otherwise whimsical setting will remain with his readers long after the reams of fantasy trivia have been set aside.

For *The Two Towers* (*Towers*), the second in their series of computer role-playing games based on *Lord Of The Rings*, **Interplay** has also put together a scenario rife with evil and darkness. Like the first entry, it is a sprawling and ambitious project which is abundant in detail. Tolkien fanatics



who are still arguing the merits of *Volume One* will doubtless find even further grounds for debate with the release of *Towers*.

In contrast to the somewhat leisurely opening of *Volume One*, *Towers* bursts immediately into battlefield action. Knee-deep (or, in the case of the hobbits, shoulder-deep) in orcs, members of the recently broken Fellowship now look to serve the cause against evil, each in his own way. Frodo Baggins and his eternal companion, Sam, remain determined to fulfill their mission by carrying the One Ring to Mount Doom. Passing through the grisly swamps which bear the visages of fallen warriors, through the beleaguered Ithilien and into the spidery Cirith Ungol, these two heroes will be hard pressed to find trustworthy allies. Most important among these is Faramir, brother to the misguided Boromir whose fate was described in *Volume One*. With a yellowed eye fixed on his "preciousss" ring, Gollum remains nearby, often offering help yet always threatening betrayal.

"Gandalf Returns" might easily describe the early adventures of Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas, who must then begin assisting in the defense of Rohan and Gondor against the debased wizard Saruman and that UUBG (ULTIMATE, Ultimate Bad Guy) Sauron. Pausing only to help minimize the damage being inflicted by Saruman's hoards, this formidable quartet must find their way into King Theoden's presence and convince him of his misplaced confidence in Grima Wormtongue. Through the halls of Theoden's Golden Hall and out onto the battlefield of Helm's Deep, this group provides *Towers* with its greatest degree of hack 'n slash.

Finally, Merry and Pippin are about to become acquainted with Middle Earth's most stalwart shrubbery, the Ents. Slow to anger, yet devastating in their retribution, these killer vegetables need assistance in getting their war-machine up and running. The two hobbits and their army must then deal with the distrustful Dunlanders and then move on to assault Saruman's stronghold tower in Isengard.

In order to accommodate this increasingly complex, multi-branched story, the game's designers have introduced an unconventional device for moving the player from one location in the book to another. At certain, secret "trigger points," the program will suddenly put the current adventure party "on hold" while the player is whisked away to supervise the quest of some other group of characters. Thus, Aragorn's explorations will suddenly be replaced with Frodo's, which will in turn give way to the adventures of Merry and Pippin. Upon returning to an area, the player will find all is as it was and the group may continue as though there had been no interruption. The



sudden switch to another sub-plot appears to be triggered by the current party reaching a particular destination. Hence, the player may stay with one group for a while, as long as it avoids reaching that location.

The sudden switches from one party to another is at once both an interesting innovation and a sudden interruption which may leave some players wishing for extra control over the adventure. However, it most likely represents rich, new territory to be explored in future adventure and role-playing games. The use of these multiple-parties with their cliff-hanger junctions clearly gives *Towers* a depth of narrative which would not otherwise have been possible. In the future, **Interplay** may wish to consider allowing the player at least a vote in the decision making process as to whether it is time to switch locations. Or, perhaps, giving the player some advance warning so that he

Interplay's *The Two Towers*

or she may feel free to tie up loose ends would not be unreasonable.

As they did in Volume 1, **Interplay** has expanded on certain elements of the original story in *Towers* in order to enhance the game. As a result, the program contains several characters and locations which are not to be found in any of Tolkien's books. Most of these, however, have been blended in so inconspicuously as to require a major Tolkien concordance in order to weed them out. Other additions are a bit more obvious, such as a mini-quest which requires a thorough exploration of King Theoden's Golden Hall, or another taking place in the caves below the fortress of Helm's Deep. The actual battle of Helm's Deep has also been modified in order to fit the format of a role-playing game and thus resembles a major street-brawl rather than a meeting of armies.

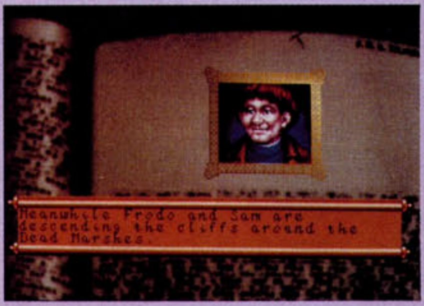
Players who have completed *LOTR Volume 1* will be at an advantage in *Towers*, provided they remembered to save the earlier game at its conclusion. The majority of a character's inventory will be carried into the new game, and each character's statistics will remain the same. The various skills which were learned, however, will not survive the transition and dead party members will not auto-resurrect, with the exception of Gandalf whose special role in the book dictates otherwise.

Towers makes use of the same game mechanics and interface used in **Interplay**'s *LOTR Volume One*. An unobstructed, full-screen display gives an eagle's eye view of the animated characters and their surroundings. For the most part, the adventure-game two-dimensional display has been dropped from this outing. The characters' wanderings are controlled by the mouse or the keyboard, and the view scrolls smoothly in four directions. Pressing the right mouse button calls up an icon-based menu for issuing non-movement commands. Although most orders are input by mouse, some typing is required during conversation with non-playing characters. In general, the use of the menus has been simplified in *Towers* in that the player need no longer exit and then re-enter a menu in order to switch control from one party member to another.

The most meaningful enhancement to this version of Middle Earth is an auto-map feature which is available from the character menu or at the touch of the "a" key. Several other improvements are also noticeable in *Volume 2*. In particular, the graphics have lost some of their cartoon-like appearance in favor of a more painted or realistic look, and the animation appears more natural. The many open fields still have a slightly sparse appearance, however, and certain encounters are only described in the text and not displayed on the screen. Enhancing the pictures is a delightful mixture of baroque and medieval background music which makes a sound-board well worth owning.







Although reviewers for *Computer Gaming World* are forced to endure years of rigorous training prior to accepting their posts, a game which carries the Tolkien name still presents certain unique problems in its evaluation. Does the product artistically reflect the tremendous appeal of *Lord Of The Rings*? If so, does it make for worthwhile interactive entertainment? Many reviewers, including myself, have lamented the quality of many of these programs and questioned the value of further computer products based on this same material. **Interplay**'s product, however, clearly deserves to be judged separately from the others. Few would argue the point that this company has produced some of the most outstanding computer role playing games on the market and there is no reason why players of such admirable products as *Dragon Wars* should not find *Towers* equally entertaining.

In deciding how well *Towers* manages to capture the spirit of the original book, it may be helpful to recall the thousands of paintings, animations, drawings and sketches based on *LOTR* which have been published during the last several decades. Of these, even the most outstanding did not find acceptance with each and every one of Tolkien's readers. Like these works of art, **Interplay**'s program is only one reflection of *LOTR* and not the author's original creation. The best answer as to how well the game conveys the essence of the book is that it is obviously put together with a great deal of care and talent. Beyond that, each player will simply have to decide for him or herself just how well this particular interpretation satisfies their own expectations.

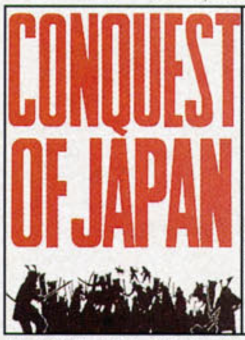
Interplay drew a disproportionate amount of fire following its release of *Star Trek* because of that program's lengthy hard disk installation procedure. For *Towers*, the process has been mercifully shortened, although the installer must still stand by the computer throughout the process in order to switch floppy disks. Players may wish to use this otherwise wasted time in order to review the game's healthy sized instruction manual which covers both game play and background material for the story in adequate detail.

"Roads go ever ever on..." mused the poet, adventurer and thief-for-hire, Bilbo Baggins. *Towers* features a seemingly infinite number of these to be traveled and explored through some of the darkest and most evil moments of *LOTR*. Veterans of *Volume One* would be wise to let their feelings for that game guide them in making a decision in investing in this follow-up. Newcomers to the series may be confused with the flow of events, yet still find *Towers* a worthy piece of entertainment. While not quite packing the commercial potential of theme parks and breakfast cereals, Middle Earth and the computer have not quite exhausted their relationship. **CGW**

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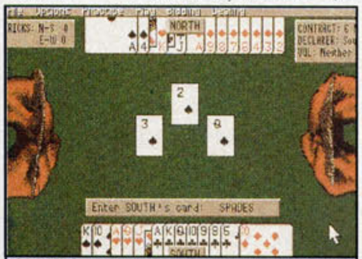
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'CONQUEST OF JAPAN' is a miniature-style war simulation in which you start with 5 randomly placed cities and hire armies in order to conquer Honshu, Japan's main island. Features real time combat, colorful animation, authentic troop formations, strategic planning, and individual troop movement. $34

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Lost Admiral Scenario $23
Lost Admiral Enhanced $38
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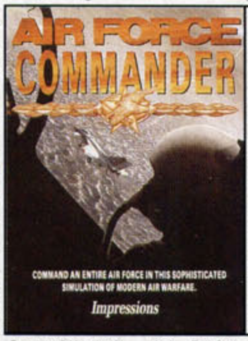


'GRAND SLAM BRIDGE 2' improves on the original to provide the most complete bridge program ever. Includes tutorial hands, practice mode and hints for new players. Supports mouse, VGA and all major sound cards. $32

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'AIR FORCE COMMANDER' is a game of air supremacy in the Middle East. Deploy squadrons at various bases, give combat missions to each squadron, and set up defensive patrols. Features satellite & geographic maps, an array of modern planes & missiles, and 28 Middle East scenarios. $34

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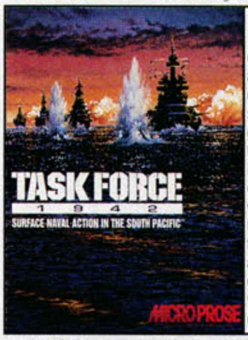
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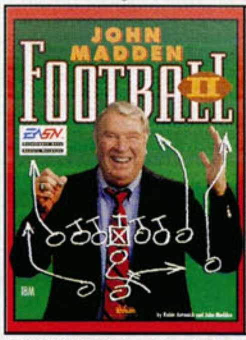


'TASK FORCE 1942' gives you a chance to command a fleet of destroyers, cruisers, and battleships against aggressive enemy forces in the South Pacific. Features night combat, realistic weather conditions, blinding explosions, flares, torpedoes, ability to send orders to ships & convoys, and VGA graphics. $39

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'JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL 2' improves on one of the most popular football games available with a new 3D perspective, play-by-play analysis, an icon menu, instant replay, and even help from Madden himself. Other features include player ratings, match-ups, injuries, field conditions, & ability to design plays. $32

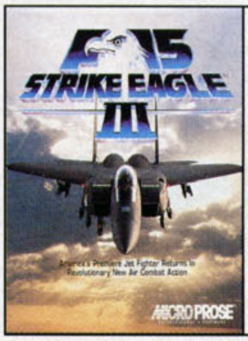
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'F15 STRIKE EAGLE 3' will challenge even seasoned pilots. Includes a new visual system that blends 3D polygon and bitmapped graphics. Features campaign mode, 2 player head-to-head by modem, and 2 player cooperative in separate planes or in the same F15. $44

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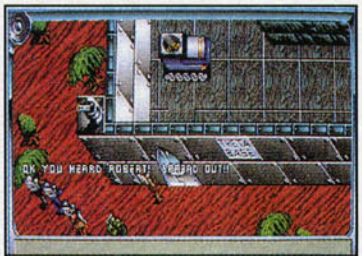
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'AMAZON' re-captures the fun of the 1950's drive-in movies. Travel to unexplored regions of the Amazon, fight 10 foot ants, and find emeralds stolen by Cortez. Amazing cinematic effects such as multiple camera angles, flashbacks, zooms, pans, & fades. Features full digitized voices & sound effects. $39

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'MERCENARIES' lets you command a group of soldiers on interplanetary combat missions. Each mercenary, civilian, and alien has their own personality. Produce your own missions with the built in scenario editor. $38

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ML TD 1982 - 1990 Ea $17
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ML Franchise Disks Ea $20

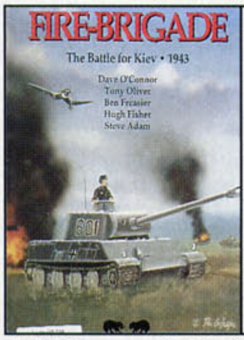
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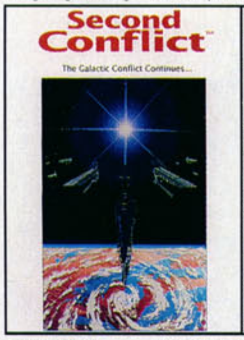
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'FIRE BRIGADE' brings perhaps the most decisive and mobile battle of WWII, the Battle for Kiev 1943, to life. Features a range of scenarios variable skill levels, realistic staff support, comprehensive reports, german or soviet command, and computer or human opponent by modem or serial connection. **$34**

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'SECOND CONFLICT' is a windows game of interstellar strategy and conquest. Test your skill against friends or the computer in one of 6 exciting scenarios or create your own with the built in editor. Choose between warships, stealthships, missiles, & transports in your quest to rule the galaxy. **$34**

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'FEMME FATALE' is a digital jigsaw puzzle for adults. The full screen VGA images may be scrambled into a varying number of pieces from 25 to 100. Numerous help features: save & reload multiple games, cancel & undo moves. IBM version includes 16 ravishing girls with optional data disks available. **$26**

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Strip Poker 3 $31
Strip Poker Data 1 $19
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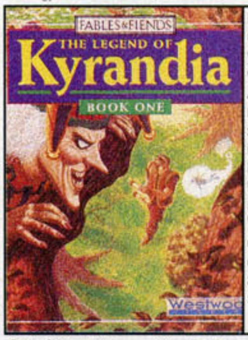
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Video Poker WIN $34
Waynes World $34
Welltris $24
Wheel of Fortune 1 $10
Wheel of Fortune 2 $10
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In 'THE LEGEND OF KYRANDIA' you travel in a land where magic is real. A land of dark and mysterious forests, sleeping dragons, breath-taking beauty, and secrets to reveal. Features realistic animation, VGA graphics, elegant point and click interface, and an orchestrated soundtrack. **$35**

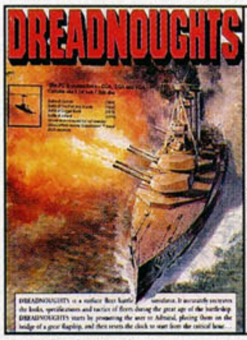
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Heroes of the Lance $12
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Pool of Radiance $15
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Buck Rogers 1 $12
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Captain Blood $ 9
Captive $30
Celtic Legends $32
Champions $37

IBM ROLE PLAYING

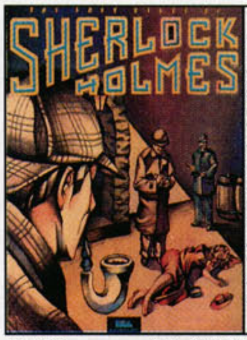
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'THE LOST FILES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES' allows you to explore and search over 50 richly detailed locations of Victorian London from the Thames to Covent Garden Square. Use your lab to analyze clues or review Watson's Journal for past conversations. Includes a classically scored soundtrack. **$44**

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'SIEGE' is a medieval style castle assault game. You are given four castles to attack and defend in a one castle scenario or an extended campaign. Includes historical troops (French, English, Celtic), mythical troops (Elves, Trolls, Giants), siege towers, battering rams, catapults, and oil. **$38**

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Air Strike USA $19
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Circle Reader Service #54

LEGENDARY EFFORT

Unveiling Images of *Legends of Valour*

by Robin Matthews

One of the major software distributors in the United Kingdom and Europe is the Birmingham-based **U.S. Gold**. They specialize in importing U.S. software, including such labels as: **LucasArts**, **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**, **New World Computing** and, most recently, **Sir-Tech Software**. The above list reads like a 'Who's Who' of computer role playing and adventures, and it seems as though over the years, they may have learned from these masters of story telling as they prepare to launch their own CRPG —*Legends of Valour*. OK, I hear all the protests, "Not another Legend of something or other!" Well, this time, Legends could be made of this…

[Note: The sections of this sneak preview which are printed in italics describe portions of the game's story and events. Readers who wish to avoid information which may tip off portions of the plot may wish to skip over these sections.]

Legends of Valour is the brainchild of one Kevin Bulmer, designer of the graphically impressive *Corporation*, and is due for release sometime in late 1992. It is a single player role playing/graphic adventure set in the mythical land of Wolfbrood. The plot has a familiar ring — the player's character receives a letter from his/her cousin Gareth and, after coming into an inheritance following the tragic death of his/her father, sets out for the town of Mitteldorf. Character development is easy and features a choice of human, dwarf or elf, as well as male or female. An interesting touch is that one can also select "body size" with either Ectomorph (skinny), Mesomorph (muscular) or Endomorph (fat). One cannot help but wonder how many are going to be brave/honest enough to select the latter?

In accordance with usual CRPG practice, there are characteristics and abilities that vary with the player's race. These include: strength, memory, manipulation, health and appeal. Naturally, the race selected will affect the character's starting point (one of six villages) and will also set the type and quantity of the character's initial trade goods.

Travelling to Mitteldorf, the protagonist pauses by the side of the lake and ponders the future, while overhead, a majestic dragon swoops down on its prey. Then, looking out onto the lake, one observes a giant Manta Ray scavenging the lake bed, oblivious to the fisherman in his coracle. [Note: The scenes are supported by fully digitized 256 color graphics, created using the latest CAD technology.]

After a short while, the hero/heroine reaches the town of Mitteldorf and the game really hits its stride. Movement is not in squares and turns are not executed in 90 degree chunks, but is completely 'free form' and allows the player a complete venue in which to explore the gaming world in non-linear fashion. The sensation is similar to that found in *Ultima Underworld*, except this movement is smoother and quicker. It is also superior in that when one's nose is up against a wall, the individual pixels do not dominate the view. Indeed, the graphic quality is quite astounding, particularly since **U.S. Gold** insists that the engine will work on 286, 386, 486 and Amiga (1 Meg). To run on slower machines, rather than adopting the approach taken by many software houses and reduce the level of detail, **US Gold** has inserted a facility that maintains the detail level, but reduces the size of the gaming window.

The interface is completely mouse-driven and point and click with the interesting development of a window showing objects in the character's current location. So, if one stumbles across the hilt of a sword when walking into an area, the hilt will appear in the window and can be used immediately or put into the inventory. The main screen contains stats information, movement arrows, action verbs, inventory and a compass rose in a surprisingly uncluttered display. The whole program has a feel of quality and it looks as though **U.S. Gold** has really learned from their years of distributing the best about.

Anyway, back to Mitteldorf. Upon entering the town, one discovers plenty of items and objects strewn all over the



place, but no *people (cue the Twilight Zone theme)! What has happened? Where is everyone? Should one pick up a certain sword, embedded in the ground, the sound of thunder reverberates through the empty town in the most dramatic omen since Arthur pulled Excalibur from the stone. Should the character panic and decide to retreat, the next discovery is that Mitteldorf is not deserted. It still has two of the biggest guards ever seen barring the town gates.*

The 3-D world is created with shaded texture-mapped graphics, with locations having a variety of fixed sprites, scaled in real time — trees, obelisks, lights, pillars, tables, stalagmites, stalactites and fungi. These attempt to create unique locations, giving the town a depth and 'feel'. The town itself is huge, and a detailed auto-mapping feature is included.


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One look down, and you'll never know. After all, when you're racing along narrow catwalks, searching frantically for energy crystals, there's no time to dwell on a fear of heights. Especially since the clock keeps ticking, and you haven't even begun to explore this intergalactic maze. Maybe... over there! Another quick turn, and you're racing down a ramp so steep, you want to shut your eyes. Fighting to slow down, you catch some major—and totally unintentional—air. Mid-flight, you spot the crystals, but it's too late; you're already over the edge. Before you know it, you're learning what it's like to bungee jump without the cord. With thirty completely different worlds, and fifteen levels to each world, you may not make it on the first try—but you'll certainly get hooked along the way.
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Sneak Preview

Now, back with these guards, they tell our hero(ine) that the town is in quarantine by order of King Farley Dacre. Being truly heroic, the character uses conversational skills to find out that, in fact, there isn't a plague — just an awful lot of funny goings-on. Satisfied that our hero(ine) is an OK person, they let the character go his/her way, which means on to the Custom House where goods can be traded.

Trading is an important part of *Legends of Valour* and allows one to earn some cash, obtain items and even solve some of the massive number of quests. The main tradeable items are: gems, spices, pigments, grain, hides and ale. Naturally, these have a different market value in each village.

A sub-plot informs the protagonist that the Custom House Keeper's daughter does not approve of her father's swindling of novice traders. So, if she can be found, one might be able to persuade her to hand over access to her father's stock — allowing one to actually sell the goods back to him at a profit!

A priority is to find somewhere to spend the night and The Travellers Inn is one of eight Inns or Hostels that exist in Mitteldorf. These allow one to rest, but food and drink may be a greater priority, at this point! The Hanged Man is open for trade, and the menu is quite mouthwatering. Bugburger, Fried Zombie Brains and even Minotaur pie are typical of the understated but tongue-in-cheek humor that pervades *Legends of Valour*. Eating and drinking play an important part in maintaining health levels, as undernourished characters are more susceptible to disease, while overindulgence causes indigestion. Too much of the demon drink is rather more serious. The effects are clearly seen by the staggering movement and impaired vision, but one can even be arrested and incarcerated for public intoxication. In addition, gambling is as prevalent in *Legends of Valour* as it is in other CRPGs. Mitteldorf boasts a casino where games of chance include a form of "Find the Lady" and of "Crown and Anchor," while the speciality of The Hanged Man is "Cockroach Racing." This level of detail is typical of *Legends of Valour* and the attempt to create a rich alternate world, complete with traditions and local customs.







In the story, the player's character takes in too much of one of the local customs and falls out of the pub much the worse for wear. Things have changed, however. It is now night time. [Note: Mitteldorf has a full day/night cycle, varying according to the time of year.] The shops and inns open and shut according to strict opening hours, but beware the night — it is the domain of werewolves, vampires and ghouls. One stumbles around the streets of Mitteldorf, well under the influence, bouncing off walls in a totally disorientated fashion and careens through a doorway, down some stairs and into total darkness. Struggling to find tinderbox and kindling, one hears some strange noises and, as soon as the room is illuminated, it becomes clear that the character is in a strange cavern. Two waterfalls cascade down the wall and the room is full of pungent giant mushrooms, when something stirs behind the character, giving off a horrible guttural sound. All of a sudden, the character discovers that the fall downstairs and the environment has been sobering. The character returns to ground level, leaving the strange cavern and its apparently stranger inhabitant, but knowing that he/she will have to return.

Sooner or later, a CRPG always requires combat. In *Legends of Valour*, this can be enacted in either real-time or auto-combat mode. Strength and manipulative skills are combined with weapon characteristics and attack strategy to determine attack value. This is compared with a defense value, calculated in a similar way, plus a random factor.

Magic also plays an important part in *Legends of Valour*, with both offensive and defensive spells to be learned within the arcane halls of the Magic Guilds. Other Guilds exist, including a Thieves Guild. Membership in the latter precludes some activities, but does allow one to steal from others with impunity. Without membership in the medieval equivalent of a special interest group, one found stealing items is likely to be arrested and taken before King Dacre. In Dacre's court, justice is swift and blind, a place where, more often than not, guilty characters will find themselves imprisoned for a couple of weeks.

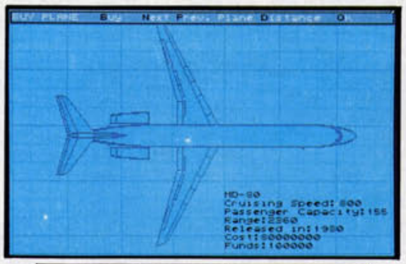
NPCs abound in the game and can be conversed with via a wonderful 'Oi!' command. Fortunately, there is a very active grapevine, especially with certain characters. For example, if one person in The Hanged Man knows that someone has stolen some wine, it won't take long before everyone he meets will know about the vintage acquisition. The game carries these conversations along and, eventually, a guard may overhear. Thus, the next time the guilty party bumps into an official, it will be time to visit the King's court as involuntary guest.

In short, *Legends of Valour* features the large town of Mitteldorf, plus underneath a massive network of man-made dungeons and sewers connected through a natural cave system. These underground areas have the same movement system, and an eerie claustrophobic environment is created. It is a stimulating new perspective on fantasy role-playing and offers a stimulating new venue for CRPG aficionados. CGW

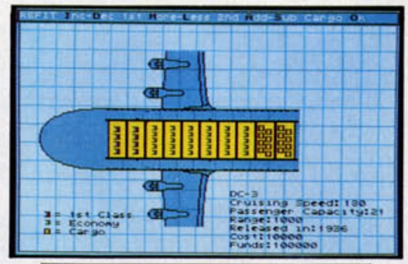
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- *1 to 4 players (human or computer)*
- *Sophisticated economic model.*
- *World map can change every game.*
- *Fleet size larger than you're likely to ever need!*
- *Detailed Graph Chart and reprints*
- *Hi-Resolution Graphics supported (IBM PC).*
- *Easy to use point 'n' click interface.*



- You can even set the luxury level on your fleet.



- There's money to be made in cargo as well as passenger flights.

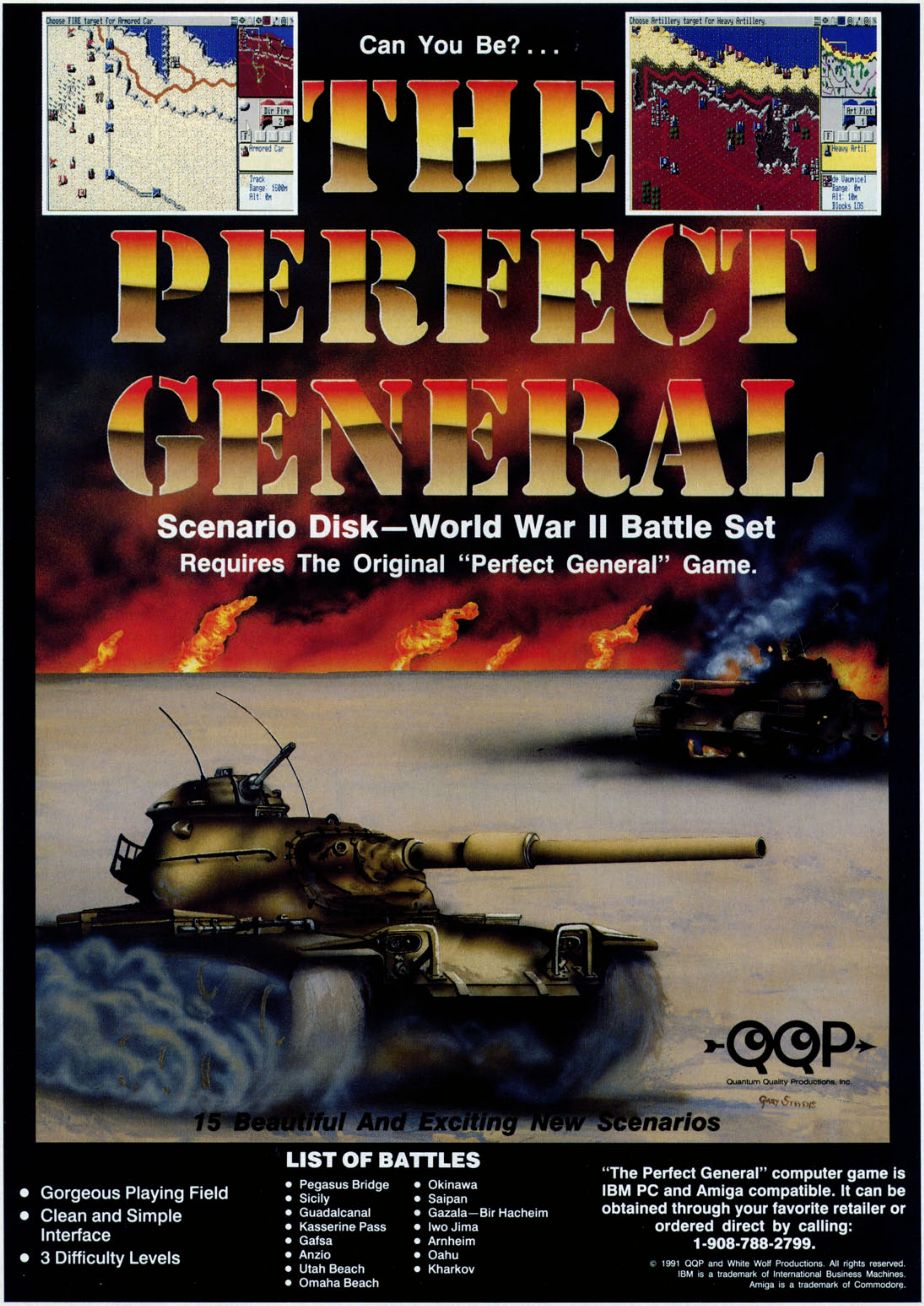


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Impressions

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Gary Stevens
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• Clean and Simple Interface
• 3 Difficulty Levels
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• Sicily
• Guadalcanal
• Kasserine Pass
• Gafsa
• Anzio
• Utah Beach
• Omaha Beach
• Okinawa
• Saipan
• Gazala—Bir Hacheim
• Iwo Jima
• Arnheim
• Oahu
• Kharkov
"The Perfect General" computer game is IBM PC and Amiga compatible. It can be obtained through your favorite retailer or ordered direct by calling:
1-908-788-2799.
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Andrew Visscher's and Bruce Williams Zaccagnino's ...

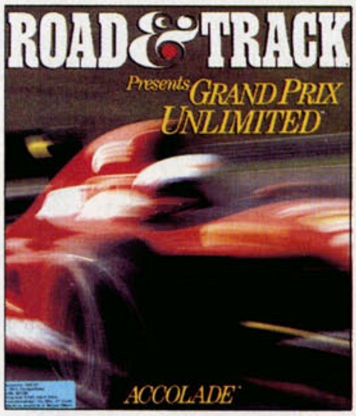


Car on a Hot Tarmac

Accolade's *Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited*

by Wallace Poulter

TITLE:	Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	Code Wheel Look-Up
DESIGNER:	Tom Loughery
PUBLISHER:	Accolade San Jose, CA



Phoenix, the opening round of the season. Clark's number 5 has the pole, Senna next to him on the front row. The Williams-Renault pair of Mansell and Patrese sit behind, awaiting the start impatiently. The green light launches 16 screaming machines toward the first corner. Clark, accelerates away from Senna as they dart into the first corner, a right hander. Behind them, Schumacher and Brundle are fighting it out with Mansell and Patrese for only one line on the track. In the ensuing melee Clark is hit from behind and on the rain slicked surface it is enough to send him spinning off the course. Tragedy strikes as the car hits a tree!

Qualifying

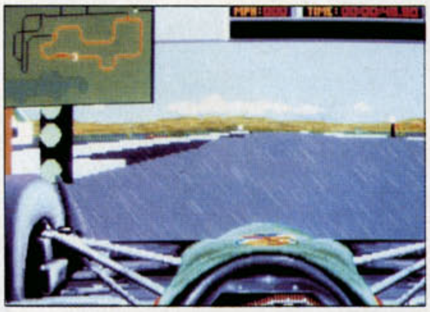
First, there was **MicroProse**'s *World Circuit*, and now there is *Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited* (*GPU*) from **Accolade**. This summer has been a delight for the Formula One fan. Once again the legends and myths of all that is Formula One, come swirling to the fore. The days of heroes. Villeneuve, Clark and Hill, still racing in our minds. Today's warriors are Mansell, Senna, Schumacher and Patrese. *GPU* has them and more.

First impressions are positive as the product comes with five real life car setups, Williams-Renault, McLaren-Honda, Ferrari, Tyrrell and Bennetton-Ford, 21 F-1 circuit tracks, named drivers and a course designer. This constant design decision made by **Accolade**, of allowing the user to add to the product through the use of a playbook editor or course designer, is a practice theme that should be applauded. *GPU*'s qualifying lap puts it on the front row, next to *World Circuit*.

Warm Up Lap

However, doubts begin to creep in when the manual displays such items as "Grand Prix Racing's All-Time Top 5's (Through 1991 Season)," which lists Wins as Alain Prost (44), Ayrton Senna (33), Nelson Piquet (23), Nigel Mansell (21) and Gerhard Berger (6). What was obviously meant was the top five, in number of wins, of the current drivers, but it is a detail that should not have been overlooked. More importantly, it is indicative of such problems throughout the product.

Speaking of fives, *GPU* has *five* levels of difficulty, three levels of graphic detail and a number of driver aids such as auto-shift and lane control. The latter is an improvement over *World Circuit*'s tendency to keep the car on track at all costs. So, *GPU* still looks like a strong contender.



The Circuits

GPU allows the user to partake in a single race, strive for a World Championship or try his/her hand as a course architect. All the famous courses such as Monaco are here. In many instances, however, the courses are in name only. Unfamiliar buildings and layouts greet the user. Worse still is the proliferation of trees alongside the course. In a product that claims "*Grand Prix Unlimited* was designed for the most demanding racing enthusiasts — perfectionists that stock cars could never satisfy," such lack of attention to detail is baffling.

Further investigation of the course editor shows that while there are an impressive number of objects made available to the user, they are not editable. Nor can the budding designer import new objects. This is a step backward.

GPU may end up being in a situation similar to *Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf*, where the the courses designed by users are significantly more enjoyable than the ones provided with the game. In addition, a "Circuit Creation" option allows a unique World Championship every time. Gamers can build a European-only tour or any other combination desired.

Racing

Once into the cockpit, *GPU* improves. Finally, a racing game where driving is an acquired skill and not a given. The first time user will almost always crash, as the controls and many options take some getting used to. Hence, practice is the order of the day *and* the night. Players must learn to anticipate the moves of the other drivers, whose speed and aggressiveness is controlled by the level of difficulty, in order to be successful. For this purpose, it is wise to use the instant replay feature to study the driving skill displayed at entering and exiting the corners of the tracks.

Each race has a qualifying lap and the number of race laps, competitors and weather is all adjustable. The maximum number of competing cars is 16. A nice piece of chrome allows the user to drive a manufacturer's car, such as Williams-Renault, while keeping the two drivers from that team in the race. I particularly enjoyed the experience of challenging Mansell and Patrese while also driving a Williams-Renault.

Gear Missed

Alas, there does seem to be engine smoke, however. The annoying music track and dragster-style starting lights can be dismissed as small matters, but starting from the back of the grid is particularly frustrating. The user has to wait a significant amount of time for the cars in front to move and even then, anything more than 10 mph is liable to cause a crash. To quote the manual "A Formula One race car needs only 2.7 seconds to go from 0 to 62 mph." Unfortunately, that's not true in this game.

In addition, the driving model seems to be such that the player will slide through corners regardless of the car's set-up. I tried it with several combinations (although, obviously, not every possible combination) and still felt that the car was more difficult to control than it should have been. More definite is the frustration many have encountered when entire sections of the track disappear while one is travelling at a high rate of speed. This definitely needs to be repaired in **Accolade**'s programming pits.

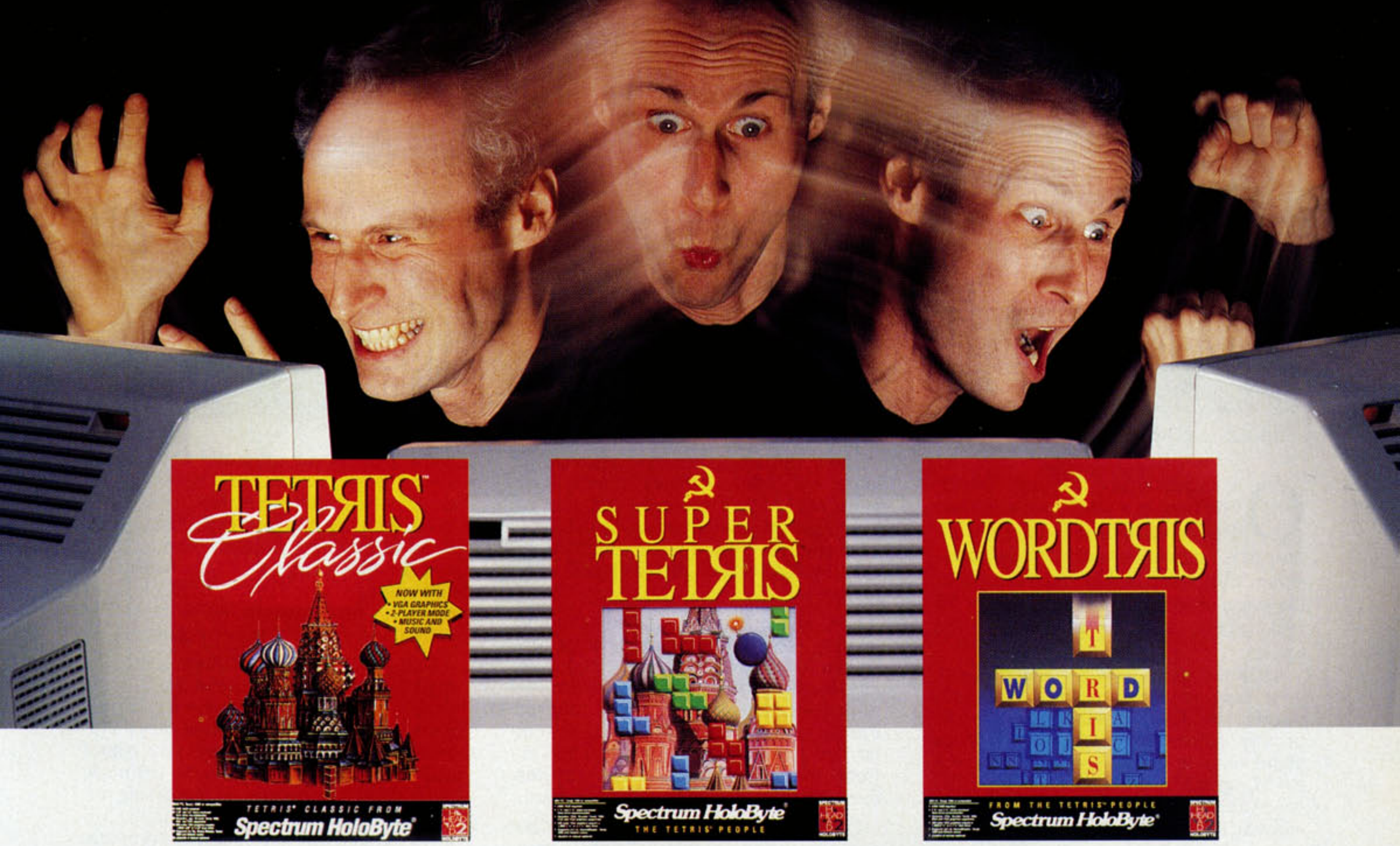
Play it again Sam

One area of notable improvement is the instant replay feature. This mode is easy-to-use and very intuitive. As noted earlier, strategies and skills can be learned via this. In addition, the course architect allows the placing of camera positions around a course. This and the variety of angles offered makes it the state of the art within racing products.

Conclusion

Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited is an extremely frustrating product. There is a gem of a design waiting to be discovered yet this excellent design work has been compromised by the implementation. To return to the opening metaphor, *GPU* DNF (Did Not Finish) after suffering a blown engine (pun intended). CGW

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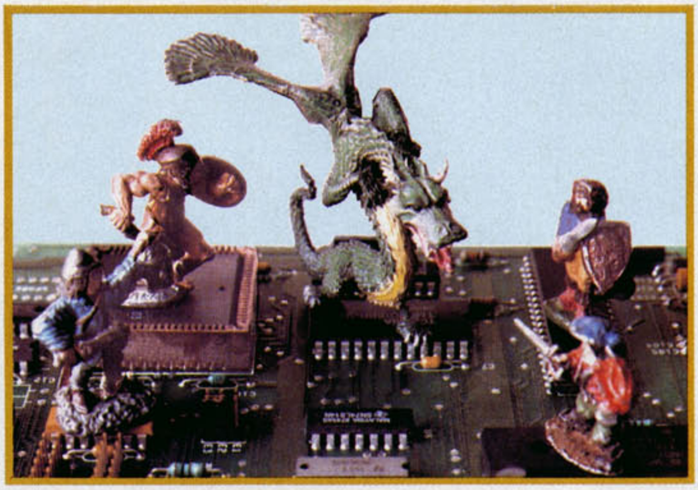
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Circle Reader Service #109

Scorpion's View

as told by Scorpia



Whats' in a Game?

The Current State of Computer Adventure / Role Playing Games

Scorpia is an experienced and respected adventure game expert. CGW is pleased to provide this forum for her distinctive and often controversial perspective.

Once upon a time, life was simple. You bought a game, put it in your disk drive and, if it didn't work properly, nine times out of ten the cause was a defective disk. You exchanged it at the store, or sent it in to the company for replacement, and that took care of the matter.

After the game was up and running, your only problems were the devious puzzles and deadly combats that are part of any adventure or CRPG. Worries about running out of space, insufficient RAM, graphic compatibility or CPU speed rarely, if ever, intruded on your enjoyment.

In a word, the computer environment was stable. Hardware drove the software and programmers coded within the narrow confines of the 8-bit environment. Designers may have railed at times against the limitations, but standardization allowed games to be produced quickly, with a minimum of bugs, and ported to other platforms in a relatively short time.

Those golden days are gone forever. The open meadows of the 8-bit world have been replaced by the jungles of the 16/32 bit machine, and the underbrush isn't going to be cleared out any time soon. Today, gamers often spend more time fussing, fretting and cursing over system configurations than they do over the games they're trying to play. High-tech programming is pushing hardware to the edge — and some would say, already *over* the edge.

Such a sentiment, especially in the MS DOS segment, is not surprising. Open architecture has brought with it both blessing and bane, and these days, the down side seems to have the upper hand. Hi poweredcomputers have allowed for larger and more complex games, complete with superb graphics and musical accompaniment undreamed-of in the old 8-bit era. However, this same technological progress has brought with it a two-fold problem.

First is the current state of computer gaming. The open environment of MS-DOS allows for a wide variety of personally-configured systems with any number of peripheral devices and cards attached. Further, many of these, while quite similar, are not exactly the same. The very freedom that allows for a custom system thus creates a programmer's nightmare.

Drivers must be written for the most popular sound boards. Graphic cards must be taken into account. Different BIOS are investigated. Various brands of IBM-compatible computers tested. And there are the treacherous waters of DOS itself, with its 640K limit and the kludge of extended and expanded RAM. All of those need to be tried in different combinations on different computers and it isn't possible (or feasible) to do every one of them; no product would ever see the light of day. Therefore, a cut-off point, a certain minimum configuration, has to be determined, and usually this is on a game-by-game basis.

Even then, difficulties arise. More and more game manuals these days include a section on modifying CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files in case the game won't run on a particular set-up. Directions are also given for creating a "plain vanilla" (or no-frills) boot floppy as a last resort before calling the tech lines.

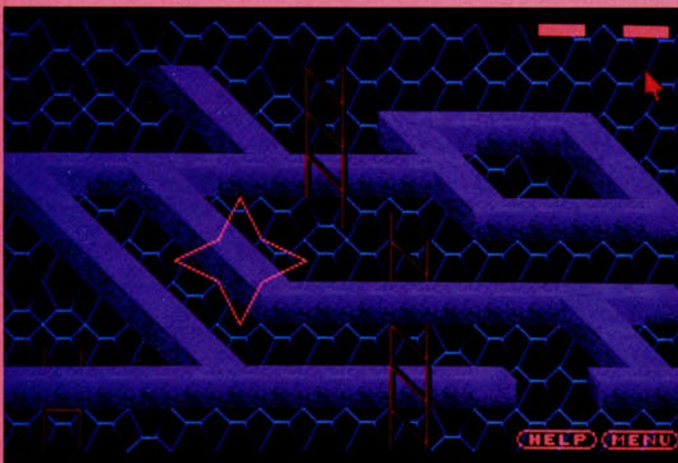
Further, the more complicated the game and its code, the more difficult it is to beta test the product. There has been hardly a major release in the last year that has come out (a) on time and (b) without severe bugs. Gamers are becoming increasingly upset at being put in what they consider a "pay to playtest" position: instead of buying a finished product, they end up with games that require patches and upgrades to run properly; patches and upgrades produced on the basis of bug complaints from those same gamers.

This situation is bad enough. It is being made worse by the second part of the problem: the accelerating pace of the technology itself. As games drive systems to the limit, new hardware comes onto the market in response to the push, a situation that is causing increasing anger and confusion, particularly in the MS DOS market, the lion's share of computer games today.

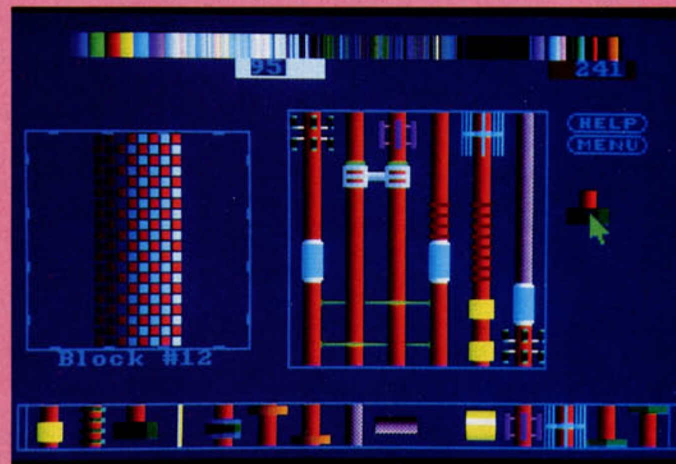
There will always be a cadre of hardcore enthusiasts who know all the technical details, all the ins and outs, who are up on the latest innovations and products, but these people do not make up the majority of gamers. The average gamer has no such expertise, and must rely on the advice of friends, family, magazines or store salespeople to make a purchase — and these may not really be aware of what is necessary to properly run today's "latest and greatest."

Imagine going out to buy your first power computer and being confronted with a chaotic swirl of numbers, buzzwords and jargon: 386, 386SX, 386DX, 486, 486SX, and 486DX, plus their attendant CPU speeds, ranging from 16-50 Mhz; graphics standards like VGA, SVGA, and VESA standards; IDE and SCSI; and second generation sound cards with, mainly, incomprehensible specs. It's almost enough to send anyone running for the closet and the old Commodore 64.

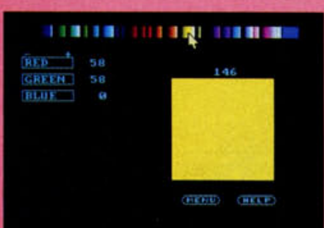
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Even the more savvy gamers are having a hard time sorting out the tidal wave of new products. Further, there is an underlying fear: the fear that in six months to a year, if not sooner, an upgrade (possibly a whole new system) will be necessary to keep pace with the requirements of the most recent games. People hesitate to buy anything they may regret only a short time down the road. Nor can everyone afford to upgrade their existing computers, or buy a new system, at that rate. Not everyone wants to, either. Many are already deciding there are just some games they'll have to live without, for the time being, or longer.

It is time for the game companies to slow up a bit. Sad, but true, it's the software — game software — that is causing today's breakneck advancements. No one needs SVGA for bar graphs, a 50 Mhz processor for databases, Carnegie Hall concerts for spreadsheets, or 4 meg of RAM for a checkbook program. Only games have these requirements, and the requirements are getting out of hand.

Progress, of course, is not going to stop, nor should it. However, the pace can certainly be moderated and the pressure on everyone eased a little, by companies taking time out to work with existing technology instead of always pushing for the high end.

Many of the reasons why this is necessary have already been detailed, but there is another, and perhaps it is the most important one of all. Strip away the pretty pictures, the music, the fancy mouse interfaces, and study the content alone.

Does it look familiar? Have we seen this before, say five or six years ago or more? Despite all the frills, all the razzle-dazzle, aren't we getting just the same old MOTSOS in a new package? MOTSOS that aren't exactly kosher, since the acronym stands for More Of The Same Old Stuff?

When the 16-bit era began, it held out much promise as to what could be done in terms of enriching the contents of games. Unfortunately, too many designers became sidetracked by the enticing but extraneous extras of graphics and sound. Most of the huge amounts of disk space required by recent games is occupied by that same graphics and sound; very little, relatively speaking, is needed by the game itself. Gamers are beginning to catch on to this, if they haven't already.

There is an increasing undercurrent of dissatisfaction among game-players. Yes, the pictures are beautiful, the music is orchestral-quality, the interface simple and easy to use, but when the game is finished, there isn't so much feeling of satisfaction with it. Rather, one has the impression that the game was only a vehicle for displaying the virtuosity of the artists and composers.

So, it is definitely time for designers and software houses to get back to basics. Blockbuster visuals and sound should be used to *enhance* a game, not overshadow it. More thought and effort needs to be put into the game itself, to create products that are innovative beyond mere technical gloss.

This goes hand-in-hand with slowing down the technology pace. Only the two together — moderate progress and improved content — can really produce quality, enjoyable games on a consistent basis. It will take some of the pressure off the programmers, allow for better beta testing, and help gamers to choose their systems with less confusion and run the games with fewer technical problems.

The gaming world will never be perfect; there will always be difficulties and incompatibilities somewhere along the line. That is the price we all pay for advancement. Whether or not that price is worth paying depends on what the software companies choose to do; let us hope, for everyone's sake, that they make the right choices. CGW

CONVERSIONS

AMIGA:

Megafortress (Three-Sixty Pacific)
Sim Earth (Maxis)
Treasures of the Savage Frontier (SSI)
Virtual Reality Studio (Domark)

IBM CD-ROM:

Chessmaster 3000 (Software Toolworks)
Secret of Monkey Island (LucasArts)
Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (LucasArts)
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IBM MS WINDOWS:

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PGA Tour Golf: Tournament Course Disk (Electronic Arts)
Robosport (Maxis)

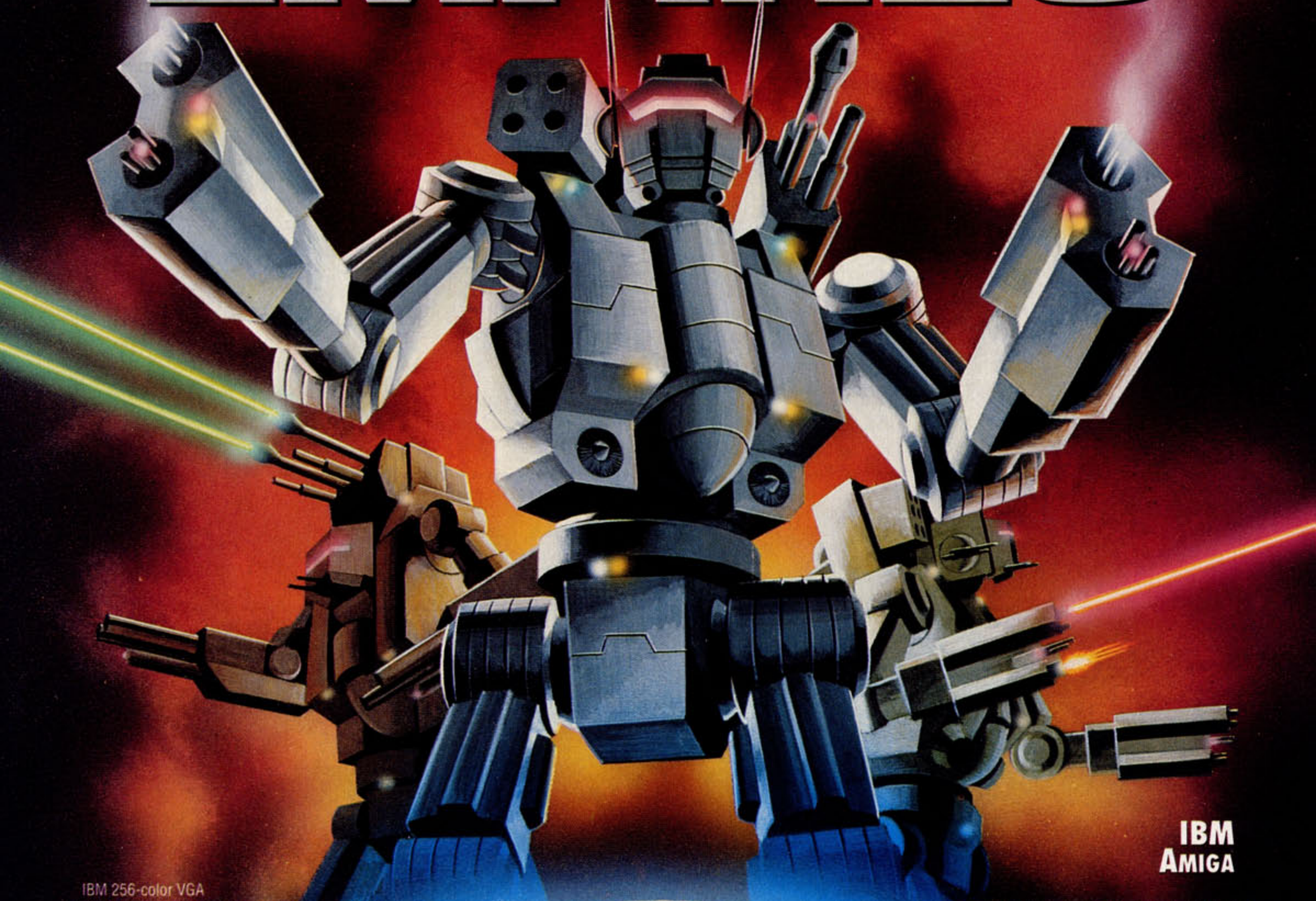
IBM VGA:

Quest for Glory I: So You Want To Be A Hero (Sierra)

MACINTOSH:

Castle of Dr. Brain (Sierra)

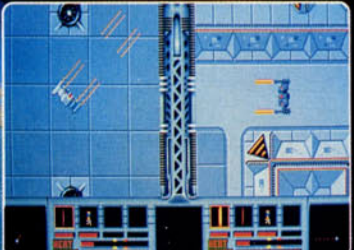
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by Wyatt Lee

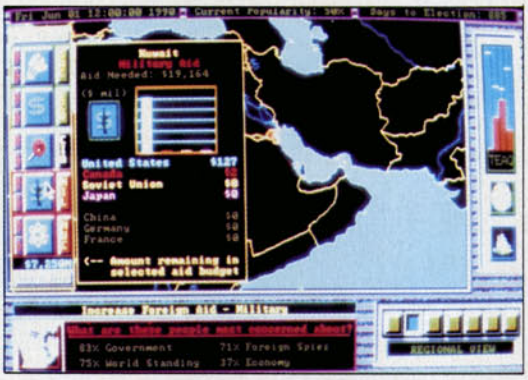
The following article is a sneak preview, covering a work in progress. CGW is proud to present this coverage of a developing game design in the interest of informing our readers. It is not intended to take the place of a review, which will appear in a future issue, based on the published product.

"Shall we play a game of Global Thermonuclear War?" The digitized voiceover from the lightweight movie thriller, *War Games*, haunts me as I press the on-screen button, see the message "Accessing Shadownet" and watch a global map appear on my computer screen. Senator Estes Kefauver had warned the U.S. in the '50s of the Cosa Nostra as the "invisible second government," and outgoing President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned the country in 1960 of the machinations of the military-industrial complex. Now, **D.C. True** puts the player in the *real* seat of power. The player calls the shots via a computer network in which he or she can tap into cabinet briefings, situational updates and the CIA World Factbook, as well as push the buttons (both figuratively and literally) that command vast minions in the executive branch to carry out the "shadow administration's" policies. There is only one catch. Since the country is, at least nominally, still a democracy, the "shadow president" must maintain enough popularity to be able to assure re-election. In this way, the almost unlimited opportunities to use power are somewhat balanced by the need to maintain a high quality of life, a reasonable level of security and the appearance, if not reality, of genuine leadership.



If one can imagine Chris Crawford's *Balance of Power* and Jim Gasparini's *Hidden Agenda* combined into an updated geopolitical simulation, it is possible to picture the flow of play in *Shadow President*. Whereas both of the previous political "games" were largely crisis-driven and players could not really intervene until opportunities were thrust into their laps, the decision maker in Shadow President can jump in at any place, at any time and change policies right and left. Such an aggressive decision maker is not likely to be successful, but the possibility is always there.

One merely moves the cross-hairs over the country or region where one wishes to intervene and double-clicks. Then, the cross-hairs are moved to the left side of the map and a pop-up menu appears. From that pop-up menu, one can increase or decrease humanitarian aid; invest or divest in the country's economic system; spend money to prop up a nation's political system or reduce funds to undermine said regime; increase or decrease military aid; or increase/decrease nuclear assistance. By clicking on the small buttons on the menu, one can enter the realms of the U.S. State and Commerce departments respectively, enter the war room, visit the intelligence community or order a nuclear strike. In former geopolitical games, the player was strictly reactive. Now, gamers can be proactive.



Leadership 101

Once the player sits in the chair of the Shadow President, there is almost a sensory overload of information available to him/her. Fortunately, any information needed is accessible on a "need-to-know" basis from the panel of advisors (portrayed and accessed, appropriately enough, by a panel of icons bearing the portraits of said advisors and located directly under the global situation map). The White House Chief of Staff briefs the shadow executive on the most imminent crises, giving an overview of the global situation. The National Security Advisor offers specific information about anxiety and ambition levels (i.e. threat evaluation). The Secretary of State informs the player about the diplomatic and political situation and the Secretary of Defense can offer specific troop evaluations. The press secretary keeps the president advised of global news and popular reactions, while the CIA liaison offers both accurate information (from the *CIA World Factbook*) and distorted information about a given country, depending upon the intelligence community's agenda. Finally, the president has access to an economic advisor that keeps him/her apprized of trade relations and economic commitments.

In short, this approach to briefing the player is similar to that taken in *Hidden Agenda*. In some ways, the alleged personalities of the advisors are sublimated to their official purpose in the game. That is, they provide information with very little spark in that the writing is almost strictly dissemination of data and not conversational. In other ways, they are stronger personalities than those in the earlier game, because they will inject personal comments when they are asked for advice and they *will* resign over policy disagreements. Nevertheless, the advisory panel allows players to access the right information more efficiently than simply having the old "open a file" on-screen schtick in order to brief the president on a given situation.

When briefed on a given situation, the player has the option of moving to the halls of decision noted earlier. At these decision venues, the gamer has a bonanza of policy choices available, each with its trade-off repercussions in terms of leadership and personality points. On the social and diplomatic agenda, one can encourage social or human rights reform; dispatch a peace envoy; initiate a cultural exchange

program; attempt to improve diplomatic relations; act to strengthen economic ties; or issue a statement of condemnation for some antisocial act. On the economic agenda, one can encourage investment in a foreign country; offer most favored nation status to a given country; or order the U.S. to regulate, restrict or block trade from that country. Such policy decisions are significant, because they allow the gamer to be proactive early in the game before the world stands on the brink of total destruction.

Yet, the truth is that many strategy gamers are also wargamers with a very serious military bent. Such players will not be disappointed in the level of military options available to them. Once one enters the war room/situation room, one can order peace negotiations; discourage/encourage military spending in a given country; perform a surgical strike on a country's military capacity; or initiate the deployment of troops and attack a country. If that is not enough, the nuclear decision venue offers not only the opportunity to discourage/encourage nuclear spending, but the opportunity to execute a nuclear strike, as well.

Finally, gamers have a wide array of covert actions to perpetrate under the CIA menu. They can supply arms to rebels (presumably bullets, beans and bandages); commit espionage; sabotage economic assets; elicit a coup d' etat; or assassinate a leader. After all, who cares if President Ford's intelligence community reforms in the late '70s promised to remove the latter two options from the covert action menu? Spying is a dirty business, right?

window, while two dominating windows display dynamic assessments of troop strength and damage verified.

The Troop Assessment window continually updates the number of troops (both friendly and enemy) in the field, available and fit for duty, as well as providing a percentage estimate of the "Will to Fight" on both sides. As one can imagine, that Iraqi will to fight drops almost as drastically in the game as it did in the actual Gulf War. At the same time, the Damage Assessment window provides information on military deaths, civilian casualties, equipment losses (in thousands of dollars) and total economic losses for both sides, respectively.

Not Just Number Crunching

One fear that I had in starting to play this game was that it would strictly be a number crunching game. I was afraid that it would be like *Crisis in the Kremlin* in that most policy decisions would be made by budgetary decisions, except when one is interrupted by a crisis. Instead, players can focus on managing where they want to manage. It does not simply have to be via number crunching, although the option for changing aid packages and throwing dollars at various problems exists. Instead, one can develop a diplomatic and political agenda that focuses on winning potential trouble spots over to the western world or even establish a military agenda of imperialistic conquest. Indeed, *Shadow President* seems to have the most open strategy track yet in a geopolitical game.

Shadow President also does not seem to have its own

D.C. True Unleashes The SHADOW PRESIDENT

This Means War!

Sooner or later, most gamers are going to order some kind of action that will precipitate war. It is inherent within the mind of the gamer to test the boundaries of a given simulation and, even for this relative pacifist reviewer, this usually means pressing one's luck until the game's algorithms jump up to bite one on the derriere. *Shadow President* is no exception to this rule, but the good news is that it continually offers disengagement options for gamers who wish to retreat from their oftimes hasty involvement in military conflict.



When one enters the war room, one has the option of deploying troops in a given country. Naturally, if one has not declared war on a given country, the game will not allow one to deploy troops there, but the Secretary of Defense will usually let the player president know that X-number of troops have been deployed in a neighboring country, pending the attack order. Of course, placing those troops in neighboring countries does tend to increase the anxiety levels in those regions and may precipitate an attack from one's anticipated opponent or an unexpected antagonist, just from their presence in the region.

If all goes well, however, the president can order an attack and the screen will provide continual news updates in a small

underlying political agenda. One senses that the game may well reflect the centrist ideology of the design team, but one does not get the sense that you have to be a centrist in order to enjoy playing the game. Every action seems to have a reaction within the game, but one does not get the sense that these reactions are leading one to a pre-determined response. Of course, when all the algorithms are in place, the game may not be quite as open-ended as it currently seems.

Appoint Counterpoint

The one major change I would like to see in the game is the provision for appointing one's own cabinet members that reflect either the president's own ideology or a political balancing act. As the game stands, one has the sense that this is a formidable, competent and moral cabinet, but the player does not get to build a coalition (as in *Hidden Agenda*) nor his/her own team. Such a feature would bring an additional sense of realism to the game, as well as introduce an entirely new catalog of variables.

Shadow President is a fascinating product that reflects considerable expertise from a team of designers who understand political science. Better yet, it offers enough solid information about the real world balanced against enough game challenge to keep those of us would-be world leaders coming back for more. If anyone wants to know whether they are made of statesperson or imperialist material, *Shadow President* offers them the right diagnostic test site to answer the question. cgw



Sneak Preview
Falcon Fragged To Hit New Target

A Preview of TTI's *TurboGrafx 16*

by Mike " Moondawg" Weksler

Sneak Previews are not designed to be reviews. They are feature articles based on "Works in progress" that CGW's editors have deemed worthy of early coverage. These articles are not intended to provide the final word on a product, since we expect to publish appropriate review coverage when the game is completely finished.

No, *TG-16 Falcon* is not a new variant of the Air Force jet fighter, it is a new cartridge game developed by **Spectrum Holobyte** for the TurboGrafx 16 and Turbo Express machines. The cartridge version, when compared to the personal computer based versions of *Falcon*, is reminiscent of the relationship between the Spirotot drawing kit which I had as a youngster, and the more complex Spirograph drawing kit bigger kids played with. Spirotot, although boasting less moving/drawing parts, was still fun and challenging to its target market segment. Even so, *TG-16 Falcon*, when compared to its more complex personal computer based counterparts, is fun, challenging, and like most good cartridge games, engrossing.

Scramble

TG-16 Falcon seems to be a blend of the many versions of *Falcon* (Amiga, Atari, Mac, and PC) which have gone before it. The cartridge most resembles *Falcon AT*, but uses *Falcon 3.0*'s SAD (situational awarness display) top-down 360 degree view radar, thus eliminating the need for a TWI (threat warning indicator). The moving map has likewise been eliminated. The HUD (head-up display) will also be familiar to *Falcon AT* users — all the HUD symbology, with the exception of the five mile ranging scale and target aspect angle caret, is there: moving scales for heading, altitude and airspeed, missile aiming reticles, TD (target designator) boxes, missile lock diamonds — even the LCOS (lead computing optical sight) gunsight or "snake" has been included. Navigation to the target is accomplished with arrows at the bottom of one's HUD pointing the way, replacing the INS (inertial navigation system) cursor.

"Green 'Em Up"

TG-16 Falcon is fairly close to its big brother *Falcon 3.0* in that it can fire the active radar homing AIM-120 AMRAAM. However, it would have been better to include a more recent model of the AIM-9 sidewinder. The one in the simulation seems to resemble the AIM-9J which requires a close-in shot at the rear quarter. Since it is relatively difficult to get in that position with the MiGs in this simulation performing both horizontal and vertical maneuvers, as well as only being bit-maps with a few variations in their position (they sometimes perform the "floppy halibut" maneuver by flashing their top-down views even when their lift vectors are pointing away), it is tough to make use of these missiles. Other weapons include: AGM-65B Maverick (air-to-ground missile), MK-82 500lb iron bombs, and the AGM-45 Shrike (anti-radiation missile). Countermeasures include the ALQ-131 ECM (electronic countermeasures pod), Chaff and Flares. One can also bring along a 300 gallon fuel tank for those longer hauls.

"Tally Ho, Eleven O' Clock, Base Plus Ten!"

Like its "big brother" simulations, *TG-16 Falcon* has a number of training missions and a mini-campaign (with 16 missions spread out over five simulated days). For each mission, pilots will be briefed regarding the targets, defenses, and appropriate weapons and tactics to employ. In the course of these missions, one can expect to encounter hardened targets with AAA (anti-aircraft artillery) gauntlets to fly through; take out SAM sites using Shrikes; and face wave upon wave of fighter aircraft, ranging from MiG-21s to MiG-29s, in the fighter sweep mission.

Upon the successful completion of a mission, pilots are presented with a debriefing screen showing the number of enemy aircraft downed, ground targets destroyed and one's total score. Missions may be replayed immediately by entering the appropriate password or using the data save feature with five "save slots" found in this beta version of the simulation. For the ultimate in dog fighting, players can fly head-to-head with two *Turbo Express* units linked up with a proprietary cable.

Fox Two! (Critical Remarks)

Since the intro screen is a digitized F-16, it would have been nice to have seen a more prodigious use of digitized art for some of the other screens. For instance, after one returns from a successful mission taking out several SAM sites, one is treated to a congratulatory screen which shows pilots running to one's landed aircraft. This goofy scene screams for the pilots to be wearing party hats. As for the music, some of it is easily recognized from *Falcon 3.0* and is done quite well, while other parts of the music are more suitable for a cozy little Italian restaurant.

Controlling one's aircraft in combat is rather difficult with the paddle and was considerably easier with the Turbo Stick. Perhaps a seasoned cartridge enthusiast will feel right at home, but I found it clumsy to fly with the left hand all the time.

Return To Base

TurboGrafx 16 Falcon was more interesting than most cartridge-based air combat sims in that it had clear objectives and more realistic confrontations with regard to the number of enemies encountered. The simulation is as good a port from the PC as one would expect given the hardware limitations. It is a shame that *TG-16 Falcon*'s time over target is so late.

*TurboGrafx 16 Falcon is developed by **Spectrum HoloByte** and published by **Turbo Technologies, Inc.** and should be available as this magazine goes to press (the end of August), with a suggested retail price of $49.99.* CGW



Circle Reader Service #111

Did You Want The Hot Wax?

A Sneak Preview of Accolade's *WaxWorks*

by Johnny Wilson



Sneak Previews are not designed to be reviews. They are feature articles based on "works in progress" that CGW's editors have deemed worthy of early coverage. These articles are not intended to provide the final word on a product, since we expect to publish appropriate review coverage when the game is completely finished.

Combine the eerie tableaus to be found in the classic short story *Waxworks, a Vault of Horror* comic story ("Portrait in Wax") and the classic 3-D horror film *House of Wax* with a story that resonates with the best of the '60s era *Creepy* magazine stories. Then, add a pinch of adjustment to the interface and several slices of gruesome graphics from **Horrorsoft**'s previous **Accolade** bestsellers (the award-winning *Elvira* series) to this smoldering mixture of the macabre. The result should be something like *WaxWorks*, the latest in the **Horrorsoft** scareware packages to be published by **Accolade** (as of press time, the game is expected to be released in November).

Now On Display (The Story)

The short story entitled *Waxworks* was originally published in the famous British publication, *The Strand*. It was one of the first short stories to exploit a basic fear, that fear that the figures in a wax museum might be something other than wax. In the case of the story, one of the figures was a live murderer. In the case of *House of Wax* and the story in *Vault of Horror*, the figures were actual human corpses covered with wax. In the *WaxWorks* CRPG, the figures serve quite a different purpose.

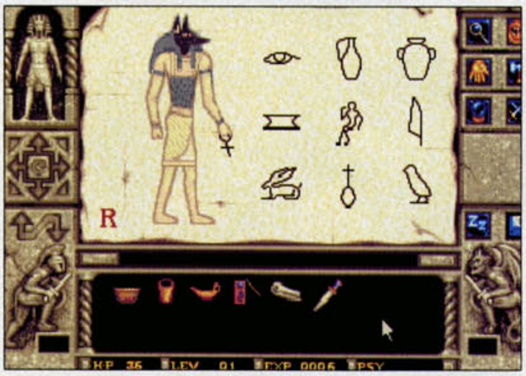
In the *Creepy* comics series (published in the '60s by **Harris Comics** and currently being reprinted by **Dark Horse Comics**), the protagonists (none of which could be considered heroic by any stretch of the imagination) arrive at an old (dare we say "creepy?") house through various mysterious machinations, only to discover that they are trapped inside as the guests of their old Uncle Creepy. As the plot progresses, they discover that their forebears had engaged in complex, occultic rituals and, in exchange for power, had sold the innocent souls of their descendents to the forces of Hell. So, the creepy old house turns out to be a nexus point for several dimensions and each of the rooms within the house turns out to be an alternate dimension where the protagonists "get theirs."

In the CRPG, the *WaxWorks* player becomes the heir of his weird Uncle Boris' dilapidated, old, Victorian-style house. The player soon discovers that this is not just any house, but it is (like the upstairs flat in the 19th Century British story) actually a museum housing a full collection of wax figures. Also, like the flat in the earlier story, it is a collection that celebrates criminals and alleged witches. In addition, the game throws some monsters from film and history into the mix of Uncle Boris' collection. Unlike the short story, however, and much like the comics series, each exhibit is to be found in a different room and each room is the dimensional interface into another world. In the course of the story, the player is also likely to find out some unpleasant truths about Uncle Boris *and* his long-lost twin brother, Alex. There was a reason that Alex liked to spend so much time at creepy, old Uncle Boris' place and it seems that certain rituals from the past were to impact a future generation in this story, as well as in the old comic series.

So it is that experienced *Elvira* players will now be aware of the fact that the layout of the game is much like Elvira's

movie studio from *Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus*. Instead of solving the puzzles and defeating the monsters on three different movie sets, however, players will spend an expected 100 hours of their time travelling into other dimensions via the wax figure tableaus in each room. There are five "worlds," each slightly larger than their *Elvira II* movie set equivalent. Two of these alternate worlds are Ancient Egypt and 19th Century England, though only Ancient Egypt was implemented in our early version, and the game will include the obligatory haunted cemetery to be found in virtually any horror game.





(Inter)facial Expression (The Interface)

At first glance, players will think that the screen has not changed since the *Elvira* series. The player's character is still shown in the upper left-hand corner and the whole game is still icon-driven. Yet, there is an additional button on the right hand side of the action window where players can access Uncle Boris in the afterlife via a crystal orb, as well as cast spells via the device. Obviously, this is analogous to the functions fulfilled by both Elvira and her recipe book in the previous releases.

On the left side of the window, there are two major differences. If one does not like the navigational icon used in the previous games, there is now an option of using a compass rose with the directions marked (very useful when navigating the pyramid). One can change back and forth between the two navigational icons at any time.

The other change is the fact that there are no longer any numbers placed around the stone icon representing the player character. This is because the game handles damage differently than it was handled in *Elvira II*. In that game, the hit points were divided among various portions of the player character's anatomy. If any particular portion of the body received more damage than the hit points allotted, the player character died immediately. Such a damage system was similar to that used in the "people and paper" role-playing system, *Runequest*, but was not received well by a majority of the *Elvira II* gamers. Being used to games where all damage was deducted from the total number of hit points, most gamers preferred the total hit point-system. So, Horrorsoft accomodated them and returned to the previous manner of handling damage.

Gamers at the Bat (Combat)

Combat is handled in precisely the same way as it is handled in the previous CRPGS from **Horrorsoft**. Players select their ready weapon by opting to "Use" one from their inventory and receiving the text message that the given weapon has been chosen as the ready weapon. Then, when encounters with guards, monsters, undead and other fiends occur, the player activates the combat icon. The cursor is placed over the area on the enemy where the blow or thrust is to be placed and the player clicks with the mouse button. If the player is successful, the familiar blood spurts will shoot out from the graphic image of the enemy. If the player is unsuccessful, it certainly will not be long before one of the classic **Horrorsoft** death scenes will appear on the screen. Gamers with a squeamish stomach are well-advised to stay away from these games, since British computer game artists tend to love showing internal organs and decapitation scenes.

Of course, one of **Horrorsoft's** classic design features is the fact that the player's character begins the game with no weapons whatsoever, save his fists. So, the very first order of business will be to find a weapon and, as is typical of the genre, the best place to find such a weapon is where it has been discarded in the corpse of a former victim. *WaxWorks* is no exception and, again, the squeamish need not apply. In Ancient Egypt, for example, we found our first weapon in the back of a gruesome corpse.

Uncle Boris Took Some Wax (Conclusion)

WaxWorks looks like it will have the strengths of the original *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark* game (the hit point system and interesting spellcasting procedure) combined with the strength of *Elvira II: Jaws of Cerberus* (with its interesting and discrete venues to explore), along with some interesting plot twists that should connect with many fans of the horror genre. With a tip of its hat to some of the oldest stories in the genre and a fascinating substitute for "good" old Uncle Creepy, *WaxWorks* looks like it might please genuine horror fans more than its predecessors. **CGW**

SCARE YOURSELF SILLY



To get CGW readers in the mood for their WaxWorks horror game, Accolade is giving ten lucky CGW readers the "scare of their lives" -- a horror video four pack of some of the creepiest pieces of celluloid ever to run through a projector, including:

Little Shop of Horrors (1960) the original with Jack Nicholson, not the goofy musical.

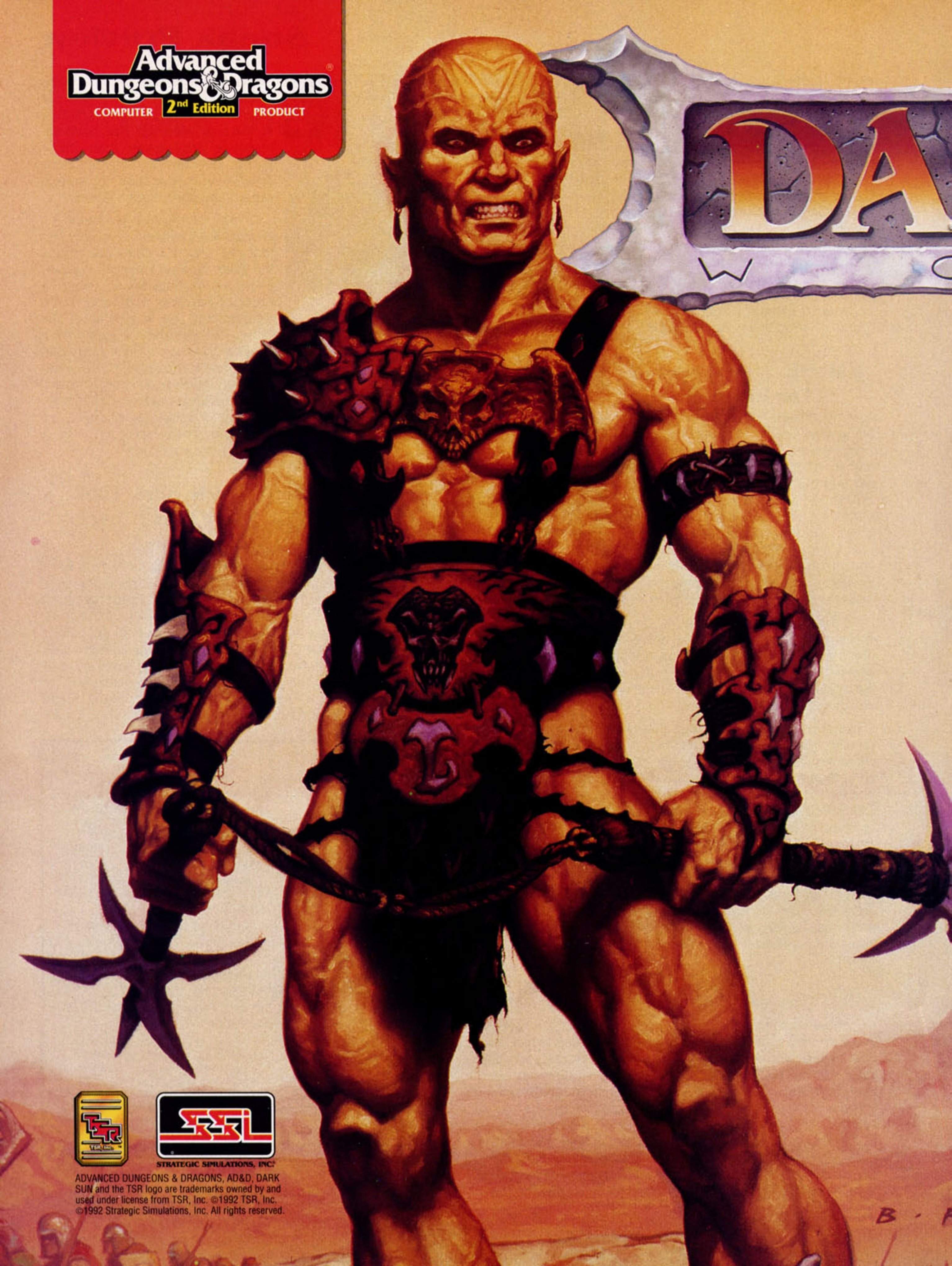
Night of the Living Dead (1969) George Romero's classic story of flesh-eating zombies.

The Mummy (1932) The Boris Karloff classic.

Mystery of the Wax Museum (1933) Starring Fay Wray.

To be eligible to win this "fearsome foursome", send your name, address, phone number, and age to: WaxWorks Film Giveaway, c/o Accolade, P.O. Box 1946, Cupertino, CA 95015-1946. Ten winners will be chosen at random. Complete contest rules available by writing: WaxWorks Sweepstakes, c/o Accolade, 5300 Stevens Creek Blvd. #500, San Jose, CA 95129.

Contest ends December 31, 1992.


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DEMENTIA PUGILISTICA

Domark's Punch-Drunk Coin-Op Conversion: PIT-FIGHTER

by David Wilson



TITLE:	Pit-Fighter
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, IBM
REVIEWED ON:	Amiga
PRICE:	$39.95
# OF PLAYERS:	1 or 2
DESIGNERS:	Tengen/Domark
PUBLISHER:	Accolade San Jose, CA

It's a hard-knock life in the boiler rooms, warehouses and back rooms of the pit-fighting circuit. No holds barred combat abounds in the jerry-built rings of this organized war for profit. Knives fly into the contest area. Bar stools blind-side a fighter with a satisfying crunch, sending him toppling to the ground. A fighter kicks his opponent when he's down. Mercy passes among pit-fighters like honor among thieves.

Pit-Fighter is **Domark**'s conversion of the extremely popular coin-operated arcade console in which players struggle to reach the top of the heap of maladjusted miscreants in the World Pit-Fighting circuit. The first question from those familiar with the arcade version will be: "Is this game anything like the original?" After witnessing the string of poorly done arcade to computer conversions over the years, it is my pleasure to answer with a resounding "Yes." With the possible exception of playing with a joystick rather than buttons and a joystick, this game *is* the arcade game teleported to the home computer. The graphics are nearly as well done, the movement is smooth and the combat plays the same. Arcade fans who enjoyed this game in the stuffy and ill-lit back room of "Donkey Kong's Quarter Crematorium" (where one brings money to burn) will not be disappointed.

Entering the ring, brawlers will find a Venice Beach-like variety of opponents to battle. The only nice guys in this game are the player's characters (Well, who writes the scripts?). Everyone else is a villain. Angel is pretty enough, but I wouldn't be caught on the street end of her spiked heels. Mad Miles is aptly named as he not only has *time* for the pain, but seems to enjoy it. The Executioner dresses funny (his momma's fault, no doubt) and he probably smells bad, too. Heavy Metal wears a Brillo pad on his head and a chip on his shoulder. C.C. Rider is a biker who enjoys the feeling of a cue stick cracking into a rival's skull (his idea of a 'solid break'). The Chainman is something of a bull in a china shop; his favorite move is a head-first toro charge. The Ultimate Warrior is currently undefeated and



seems to combine the worst traits of all the toughest fighters.

Preparing for combat with these stalwart foes involves the player choosing his fighting persona from one of three combatants, each with a unique fighting style. Kato is a Bruce Lee-type fighter with a fast and furious combination, a power backhand and a flip kick. Buzz is an ex-Pro Wrestler who utilizes a body slam, a head butt and pile drivers to make his competition say "Uncle." Ty, a kickboxer by trade, swings into action with a spin kick, a flying kick and a roundhouse.

In addition to the normal moves, players are encouraged to practice the fine art of brutality. A bonus is awarded to those who use dirty tactics like tossing barstools, using pool cues as clubs, and basically throwing anything and everything they can get their hands on. A player who kicks a competitor who is down for the count will not be penalized, but rather rewarded in cash. A cagey fighter will avoid his enemy long enough to throw an item and knock him down.

A single player may duel against the computer or two players may slug it out at the same time. When two players cooperate in a game, they will, naturally enough, face two opponents. The screen gets a bit crowded and players not only strike each *other* on occasion, but inflict *damage* as well. This is a much-needed addition to two-player fighting games.

Grudge matches are fought at various intervals throughout the game. In a two player game where players are not cooperating, players will face each other in a match for three knockdowns. The first player knocked down three times loses the grudge match and is chased from the ring with a chiding "You Loser!" from the computer.

Exploiting Features

Perhaps the simplest way of getting through this game is a type of "cheat." Begin play with two joysticks plugged in, but only play the game as a one-player game. When the current fighter is finished for



good, push the button on the alternate joystick and play through the rest of the game as another fighter. Thus, it is possible to exploit the feature that allows a second player to join the game at any time (sort of like the way wrestlers "cheat" in tag-team matches).

Pit-Fighter delivers a strong punch to the world of computerized fisticuffs. It offers the two-player option missing in many fighting games and enough roughhousing to suit the most violent gamer. Overall, *Pit-Fighter* successfully reproduces a challenging arcade fight game on the home computer screen. CGW

Twelve Steps To A Fur-Free Life

Solutions For The Wicked Level of *Oh No! More*



by Recovering Lemaholic Robert Gardner, Jr.

Wicked 1: Lemming Tomato Ketchup Facility UFMCAHVNDP

Make the first lemming on the lower level a bomber when under the right side of the chute. Make the second a bomber when he reaches circa 1/8 inch past that same point. Doing this creates a steep crater on the right and a gentle slope on the left, turning the Lems back to the exit. On the upper level, make the first Lem a climber and, when he has climbed over the one-way wall and dropped into the depression in the girder, order him to mine. He should take a whack or two and turn back to the left. Make him bash through the one-way wall and then, forget him. Let the next lemming to reach the girder walk to the right side of it and have him dig. When he is near the bottom of the thick metal plate that surrounds the girder, transform him into a bomber. He will blast a hole in the side of the girder, and, at the same time, provide a safe landing for those less courageous Lems who follow him. They will all walk into the crater on the lower level and back to the left and to the exit. Set the flow to 99 and get ready for level 2.

Wicked 2: Super Lemming NICMITWODR

Let our super hero go right, then turn back to the left and mine down the reinforced area. This will turn him back to the right. Be prepared by clicking on him rapidly as he mines into the reinforced area and you will be able to make him mine the instant he turns back. This will drop him down onto the "table" below, saving his little hide. Make him into a climber and watch him go. Have him dig through the several layers until he drops out and runs up the incline. Let him build stairs to the last platform prior to the exit. The first part of this one is easy, but when you get to that last platform, you must dig until he is just about to fall, then build. You must then quickly make him bash when his bridge clears the other side and before his little head bumps the ceiling. He will then step from his bridge at that point and trot off to the exit.

Wicked 3: This Corrosion MCALVUFPDF

There are two ways to do this one. Each requires that you have #1 build at the right to seal and that you have #2 build to slow him down. Then make a climber and let him drop to the second level and build at the edge. When he reaches the red ball he will turn back.

Now, let the climber return to the red ball, go over it and drop to the lower platform. Have him build *immediately* to turn him to the right and then build again over to the larger area. When he drops off, let him climb and then turn back to the left. When he reaches the edge, have him build. He will hit the lower platform and turn right again. Let him build up and bash the pole and go out the exit. Build a ladder to let the remaining Lems escape and as the first Lem drops to the second level, quickly have him dig through the ladder and repeat the instant a Lem hits the second ladder. This will put them onto the lower ladder with no place to go except out the exit.

Wicked 4: Oh, No, It's the Fourth Dimension — CILVUFMQDO

Make the first Lem on the lower left build just as soon as his furry little feet hit the floor. Have the first Lem on the lower right build to seal off the area and prevent unnecessary casualties. As the first two Lems enter the area on the upper left, make them bombers as they hit the floor (they will blast a path to the compartment below). Ignore the Lems who will be entering on the upper right, they aren't going anywhere. Build across from the lower left to the lower right. Leadership techniques will be challenged, because it is necessary to try and save those who follow that builder across from left to the lower right. Forget it! There are not a lot of bridges to waste and besides, they knew what they were getting into when they enlisted. On the lower right, catch a Lem going left and make him a climber. As soon as he stands up, let him build. Again, on the lower right, start a bridge to the left but be sure it is too short to allow the Lems to get out. Once the climber's bridge has reached the silver stairs, restart the bridge in the pit. On the upper left, as a Lems steps off into the hole made by the two Lems ahead of him, make him into a bomber. He should detonate at, or near, the right side of the small compartment below. If he does not blow through, then make another bomber at the same spot. Once you have an opening at this point, let a Lem walk up to the top of the silver stairs and build. Continue his building beyond the door of the exit. When he (or another Lem) drops off, let him go up to the trapped Lems at the upper right and bash them free. Free at last!

Wicked 5: Chill Out! — FAIRVLLBEK

This one is an "Easy if you know how" level. Have Lem #1 dig the instant his paws hit the ice. Just as #2 is hitting the surface, make #1 bash. If your timing is right, #2 will go left and start to build. As soon as he starts to build, pause the game and use the F2 key to increase the flow to 99. Re-start the game, keeping your cursor on #1, and make him dig, bash, dig, bash, in small increments until the other Lems are all heading to the left. At that time, either let #1 walk all the way to the end and start back, or let him dig through the ice (make him a floater first) and go to the end. Letting him walk across the top is a bit faster. Once he starts back to the left, make him a climber and that nets a 100% success rating.

Wicked 6: Pop Til You Drop — LICIHTWOCJ

There is no one "solution" for this level. All I can do is give you a strategy, as there's no way to do it the same way twice. With forty bombers (much more than needed), it is useful to save both blockers and the allotted four miners until they can *really* be helpful. I seldom use builders in this one, but they can be useful in the event some Lems end up in an area where you don't want them. My approach here is to try and concentrate the Lems from the first and second chute into one area on the left and to do the same with the Lems from the third and fourth chutes on the right. I start by having the first Lem out of #4 walk as far right as possible and make him into a bomber. I then have the first one out of #1 walk to the left and make him into a bomber when he turns back. You know approximately how far a bomber will walk before he detonates, so it's a matter of adjusting between each bomber. Have the Lems from the two inside chutes clear a path toward the outside. After that, it's your task to detonate additional bombers in such a manner as to go downward and toward the center. Once you get started, you will (sooner or later) see that the material through which you are moving is structured in such a way as to recommend the use of a miner to do what might require the efforts of several bombers. There may also be places where you need to be more precise than you can get with a walking bomber. If that is the case, use a blocker and then detonate him. This one does require a skilled hand, but if you have come this far in the game without skipping a lot of levels, you are up to it.

Wicked 7: The Last Lemming to Lemming Central — LRVLLFEDED

Place a blocker on the far right and make a bomber of the first Lem from the left when he reaches the sixth notch from the right. When he detonates, the second Lem from the right will drop through and walk to the right on the level just below. Make him a blocker at the right edge. Have the first Lem to reach the lower blocker turn and become a bomber. Make the next two Lems to reach that blocker bombers also, but let each one take about three steps further than the one ahead of him before you click on him. The idea, of course, is to stagger the point at which they detonate so that the little guys and gals who follow will not have so far to fall. Don't want any unnecessary casualties now, do we?

Wicked 8: A Towering Problem — RVLHGILEEF

Look at the floor. It's divided into segments. Activate a bomber four segments away from each pole you want to blow. Before a bomber reaches the pole, make him into a climber. If you mark off the notches ahead of time, (with lipstick or grease pencil) you can have several going at one time. The bomber will climb just high enough to clear the pole without making a hole in the floor. Be ready to quickly build as soon as the last pole is blasted. You can save 2 additional Lems by having the ones behind the builder, build also. Liberal use of the F11 key can be a great help on this one, too.



Wicked 9: How on Earth? VLHGA-HVFEO

Let Lem #1 block on the right edge of the platform and have Lem #2 walk all the way to the left and build. Have Lem #3 block behind the builder (leave distance between him and the builder). Have the builder start a second set of bridges. Let him turn, walk down to the blocker and *twice* walk back to the top of his bridge and add one more plank. At this time, make him a floater. On the next trip up, let him step off and float down. Upon touchdown, let him step as low as he can go without falling and begin to build again. When he is over the first floating platform, let him step off. One build from the edge of that platform will take him to the next one. Build from just to the left of center of the second platform over to the green crystal and from the center of the crystal over to the exit. Go back and make the left blocker into a builder. He will either build to the right or into the blocker and then to the right. The idea is to have the Lems drop down onto the long bridge from the lower left, breaking their fall, and then follow the trail blazed by #2, all the way to the exit.

Wicked 10: Temple of Love — DLGIHTTGEP

Make Lem #1 a floater and let him go. Place a blocker just to the right of the "notch" in the floor over the floating slab. When #1 gets down below and to the far right, have him build over small opening there (only one try allotted!). Allow him to walk down to the bottom of the stairs and build (3 times). Let him step off and walk to the far left. When he reaches the *very* edge, build (4 times) and make him into a blocker (if he is not on the very edge at the start of the build, he may bump his head and turn back). Catch a left moving Lem and turn him into a climber. Let him drop between the walls, into the pit and dig while he is still facing left and just an *instant* before he hits the wall. He will drop through, and go up to visit the blocker at the top of the stairs. If you still have two builds left, you can build into the blocker and on to the exit. If not, you can still make it with one build, *if* you hit the blocker and take a couple of steps down before you build. Once you start the last bridge, go back and detonate the blocker on the far right. That's it!

Wicked 11: Rocky Road — LGALTTDHEM

Let the first Lem walk up to the rock barrier and dig. When he is in about "Lem" deep, have him bash. Then select a blocker who will leave the basher and two Lems behind him. While he bashes, step up the Lem-flow to 99. Leave the basher bashing, but before he drops out at the end, make another blocker of the Lem closest to him. This will isolate one Lem between blockers. Allow the basher to drop out and then, bash through the tree in front of him. When he breaks out on the other side, detonate the blocker on the right, freeing the single Lem. When the lead Lem walks to the next barrier and turns, let him build up to the "floating" rock island (the freed Lem should be there by now). Let one walk about a third of the way up on the island and then make him block. Have the other Lem build from *him* over to the mass at the right. Let him then

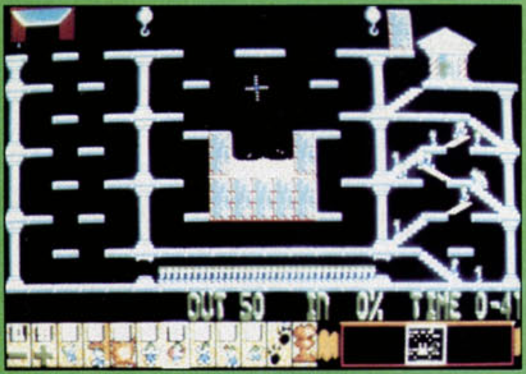
walk to the far right side, down low and build over to the next rock formation. Let him walk, but just before he gets to the end of the green growth have him mine down to the lower area. Watch Out! There is a Lem eating tendril in front of him. You can just see it sticking up. Build over it. Then, go back, detonate the first blocker, releasing the others. Let your lead Lem walk up to the crest and build from the edge of the gap over the other side. One build will do it. Once he is on the other side, let him take one step up onto the first clump of green growth and mine. He will drop down near the exit, having displayed courage and initiative, above and beyond the call of duty, under hostile conditions, to lead the way to safety for his fellow Lems.

Wicked 12: Suicidal Tendencies — GILVVLHIEN

This is really one of the most straightforward levels in the Wicked bunch. Still, I almost freaked out when I saw all those chains, etc. Just put blockers in place after letting Lem #1 get by. Be sure the blocker on the right is centered on the support beam or you may lose a batch of Lems later on. Have the lead Lem build from the top center of the last step on the incline to the first platform. After that, build from the very edge of each platform and he will build over one pedestal and land on the other. Repeat with each platform. On the last one, you can build back a bit from the edge. When a Lem starts up the incline over the exit, have him mine at a point directly above the left edge of the platform which is suspended by the chain. When he drops out onto the platform, build from the edge, over to the exit. Once he starts to build, you can increase the flow to 99 and blow yer blockers. Now, wasn't that easy?

Wicked 13: Almost Near Virtual Reality — GEHPUDLJEL

This one takes nerves of steel and no small amount of luck. Let Lem #1 build to the chain. Make Lem #2 a blocker on the right. He won't destroy the bridge if he is not standing on it. Let Lem #3 build to the metal on the left (to save a few, you might want to have the next couple also build behind him). When Lem #1 walks back to the blocker and then back to the chain, let him walk through the chain and drop to the "hook device" below. This is where the nerves of steel come in. You have to stop the Lem and have him build on that device (F11 key, please). You'll need to do this with all 3 chains. On the last one, build over to the main structure (I mentioned luck. At times, the builder will build too far through the chain and will miss the hook when he falls). When the Lems are



on the main structure, build a little more than two blocks back from the right side, up to the first "step". When he steps off the step, let him walk to the right corner and turn, then quickly build. When this stair is almost complete, increase the flow to 99 and blow the blocker. When #1 has reached the next level and has walked to the left wall and turned, have him build from the seam on the first block. When the rest of the crew show up, and the bridge to the exit is well underway, make

a blocker on the bridge. If not, then the fall as the bridge nears the exit, will be fatal. When you reach the exit, detonate the blocker and repair the bridge. It's not easy.

Wicked 14: The Lemming Learning Curve — MHPUDLGKEE

Lucky Lem #1 gets to become a miner when he is just past the third floor notch from the right, causing him to fall onto the floating slab and to the floor below. Once more, have him build just after he steps over the third notch from the right. Catch a left-moving Lem and make him a blocker at the far left. When the stairs reach the wall, let a Lem bash on through to the exit and then, turn the release rate up to 99. The blocker can be detonated as soon as there are no more left-moving Lems.

Wicked 15: Spam, Spam, Spam, Egg and Lemming MPUDLGALEO

You can save a second or two and maybe one Lem by placing the finder near the bottom of the screen and making the first Lem a floater at the last second. Let him walk to the seam between the last two blocks and mine. After about two or three strokes, have him build to turn him around. As he turns, have him build up toward his falling buddies. When the first Lem to be saved walks off, make him block at the right. Let the builder walk off the left side and build as soon as he lands on the lower block. Make a blocker on the upper left. When your builder steps off, he will land on snow below and walk up. Before he can turn, have him bash. When he emerges, have him build at the water's edge, step off onto the snow cloud, walk up and mine. As soon as he is deep enough to turn those who follow, make him build. Let him step to the edge of his mine and build all the way up until he finishes his stairs against the ice behind the steel block "ledge." Then, let him take several steps down his bridge and build over to the ice cloud, just above the one he mined. From there, build to the exit. As soon as he starts his second set, blow the blocker on the left to free the others. Go back and watch the builder, because, unless you started him very low, you'll need a third bridge to complete the job.

Wicked 16: Five Alive — PWLHGILMEM

Make Lem #1 a bomber when he is in the *center* of the first full brick after dropping from the chute. Skip Lem #2, and make #3 and #4 into floaters. When #1 detonates, quickly make #2 build from the very edge of the little gap. While he is building, #3 and #4 will walk over, but since they are floaters, they will be safe. The others will walk down the incline to safety. When #2 is finished building, he will follow.

Wicked 17: Down the Tube — ULHGEITNEI

Let #1 walk away and have #2 build the *instant* he hits the top of the globe. Let #1 walk back to the left and, when his feet are just about level with the center of the globe, build into it. Make #3 a climber and he will go over the barrier to the right. Make him build when he is two steps past the notch in the tube. When #4 drops out, have him build behind #2 (do not restart #2's bridge at this time). Watch #1. He will walk to the right and back to the left and then, over the globe. Allow him to go to the left barrier and back to the right. Make him build into the globe just as he did on the other side. Now, all the Lems are sealed in tight. When #3 is finished with his bridge, he will step off and fall to the lowest platform. Let him walk to the right and drop down to the exit. Allow him to take two or three steps and turn him into a blocker. Now, go back and restart the bridge built by #2 and increase the flow to the maximum.

Wicked 18: Lots More Where They Came From — DLGIHTUOEI

You can save 100% on this level, but it may not be worth the trouble. Begin by having Lem #1 build from the far right edge and then, build a barrier on the left by having 3 or more Lems build contiguous bridges, each one behind the other



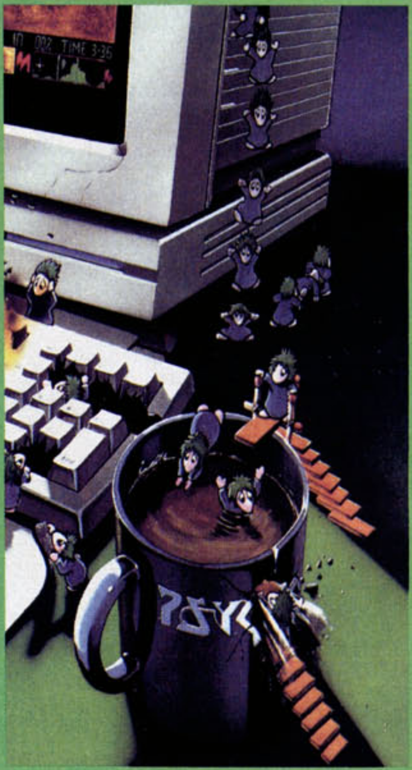
and *be sure that all are touching*. Keep Lem #1 building until he reaches the floating "iceberg". Keep the others building just to keep them safe until #1 finishes his work. Once that is done, make a climber and allow him to go up and over the top. When he is in that little "valley" about one-third across the "iceberg", just short of that tall peak, let him step up just a bit and mine. When he breaks through on the right, have him build, build again and then, mine through his bridge and drop to the block below. From there, build over to the exit. Make another climber and let him get into the tunnel dug by the first and build. When he reverses, let him get to the little valley which is about a quarter of the way across from the left and again, step up slightly and mine. That should cause him to exit right at the bridge that #1 built. If it looks too close, have him build as soon as he breaks through, to prevent a possible threat to the bridge. By the way, the flow can be increased at any time after #1 completes his bridge.

Wicked 19: Up, Down or Round and Round — HGELVWLPER

This one can be unbelievably difficult. It is rather straightforward, but the timing is ludicrous. Let the little fellows drop all the way to the bottom. Have #1 bash through the first column and let him bounce off the second column and allow #2 to have that one. Do this because, if #1 does both columns, then he and #2 will be together when you need your first bridge built and that's not good. When #2 is right at the *very edge* of the platform, freeze him with the F11 key. He needs to be almost hanging off the edge. If you can't get him that way, let him go by and try the next Lem. When you do get one in that position, place the cursor over him and depress the mouse button, then hit the F11 again. If you caught him just right, you will have a bridge that appears to hang in space and though the builder won't walk across it, those who follow him will. You *must* get two of the three bridges done this way. The other, you can use a second builder on. I have never been able to do this with the second bridge. Wherever you are when there are only 65 seconds left on the clock, *pause*, hold down the F2 key and step up the rate to 99. When you have that done, go back to work. After reaching the top of the stairs, under the exit, *build quickly* to save the Lems from the hammer. Use your last bridge to seal the tiny crack at the top of the stairs leading into the exit. *Remember*, if you don't have at least two bridges which start off "hanging" from the tip of the ledge, then you might as well nuke 'em and start all over again. Good luck, you will need it for sure in this one.

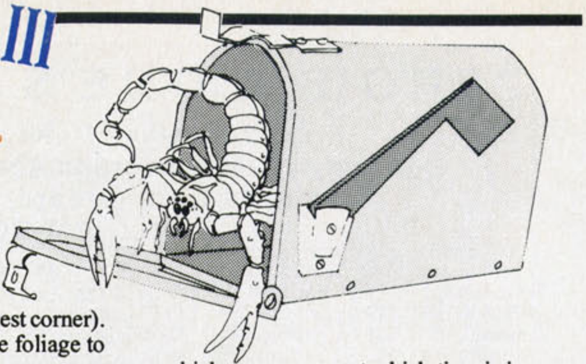
Wicked 20: The Lemming Funhouse — GILVWLHQEG

Start #1 building on the last seam of the last brick. The bridge will not quite reach the far wall. Let #2 walk off the bridge, fall below and walk down the incline where you will make him a blocker just in front of the "Death Machine". When #3 drops off the bridge and heads left, let him get down low and build to seal that gap. (Note: if he turns, then use the next guy to finish his build. Have the first Lem to hit the blocker start a bridge over the small gap on the lower level. Make the Lem behind him a blocker (but not too close to his bridge). When the builder comes back to the blocker, he will walk over his bridge. Let him go and build his last bridge to the exit. As soon as he starts (or before), increase the flow to 99 and then, detonate the left blocker. That will get it. Now, you're a hero! CGW



Might and Magic III · Elvira II · Ultima · Advanced Dungeons & Dragons · The Magic Candle II

Scorpion's Mail



Mind your step, now. The mailbags have kinda spilled all over the floor. Sorry about that, but with one thing and another, Fred and I simply haven't had the time to do much cleaning up in here (besides which, he just got back from the Grues convention and isn't in the mood for housecleaning). And that mail keeps coming in; people *will* insist on playing games. Heh.

Before getting to the good stuff, there are a couple things I have to mention.

Over the years, I've naturally received a lot of letters from a lot of gamers (you could tell that just from all the mail sacks lying around!). Most of them are just typical requests for help, but there are two types of letters that are really irritating.

The first is the letter that begins "I read your column every month in CGW," ends with "please answer these questions as soon as you can," and does not have a SASE enclosed. Sometimes, of course, the person is just in a hurry and forgets. However, I get too many letters like that for everyone to be quite so absent-minded. It's just amazing how people's literacy can desert them when they get to the bottom of the article. Or maybe they think I'll be so touched by their plight that I'll cough up the postage on my own. Nope. It doesn't work that way.

If you live here in the United States, you have to include that SASE if you want a personal reply. Only people living in foreign countries are exempt from including return postage.

The other type of letter that sets my teeth on edge is the one that says either "Please send me a list of all the weapons and armor and magic items in Game X and what they do" or "Can you send me the maps for Dungeon Y in Game Z?". Nope. I can't, and I wouldn't if I could.

It's one thing to answer a question about a particular item that has someone puzzled, and quite another to provide detailed maps or lists of equipment.

Anyone who wants that kind of information should buy the hint book, which usually contains all that inside stuff.

Whew! Okay, now that's taken care of, let's look at the latest crop of correspondence.

Ultima Underworld: Some folks are having trouble finding the blade to the Sword of Justice. That's not surprising, since the item has been very carefully tucked away on level 3, in a place that isn't easy to reach (no, not the northwest corner). You'll have to push aside a little foliage to start you on the right path.

Indy/Fate Of Atlantis: Down in the depths of Atlantis itself, Indy is having a bit of difficulty getting Sophia out of the cell. Not that he can't lift the cell door; he certainly can, but Sophia doesn't trust him to hold it up long enough for her to scoot out. What to do? Go on without her for now. Really.

Some further explorations and puzzle-solving are needed before you find what you need here. You might even say that the best solution to the game hinges on this.

Dagger Of Amon Ra: Laura Bow is back, and as usual, in trouble. If not much seems to be happening at the big museum bash, keep in mind that eavesdropping is the name of the game. There are fourteen (count 'em, fourteen) conversations she *has* to listen in on. A little excursion to the Gift Shoppe is also in order. After that, things might start to happen.

Dark Queen Of Krynn: Right up front, I'll tell you that there just ain't no way you'll ever get through that door at the top of the lighthouse. It's closed and staying closed, whatever you try. So, instead of beating your brains out up there, spend some time in that little area reached from the garbage pit and beat your brains out on the walls.

Ultima VII: Can't get to the hydra, eh? Not that you're exactly eager to take on this three-headed monstrosity, but you know how it is, a hero's work is never done. Anyhow, there has to be *some* way to reach the critter, even if it isn't obvious. This problem calls for a hands-on solution, getting into the middle of things, and a Polaris orientation.

Might & Magic III: From *CGW* reader Steve Fox comes an easy way for you to bypass the annoying lever puzzle in the Fortress of Fear (a matter about which I receive several letters a month). There is a spell you can use to (ahem) see a little better. By walking around the perimeter of the stone head room, you can catch a glimpse of the mummy king's lair, and teleport in on your own.

While this might be cheating a little bit, it sure beats running around a dungeon and pulling levers!

Elvira II: Gamers are running into all sorts of problems in this game, which is no surprise. One has to do with brains. There are two brains, and you need them both. But which one you use at which time is important. Frankie's cerebrum, for instance, shouldn't be touched for a long time. Like about until you're ready for the end game. And be careful about close-up views while you're holding the wire-cutters, or you might end up doing something you hadn't planned on.

Magic Candle II: Some folks have the mistaken impression that Orcbane is at the bottom of Drakhelm. Nope, it's much closer than that, say, on the first level. Somewhere in the neighborhood of the joyful spade, or something like that; my Orcish is a little rusty these days. But I'm sure you'll manage to find it, if you read the signs right.

Eye Of The Beholder I: - We're getting down to the end of the bonuses now. Not many left, just levels one and two to cover. In the case of level two, you may have noticed some peculiar carvings on the walls here and there. As a matter of fact, there are four of them altogether. And, while they may not look like it, they happen to be carvings of weapons. Small weapons. Just be careful that you don't give up anything magical.

Bane Of The Cosmic Forge: Seems like a few people out there have been reading the hint book lately. I've gotten several inquiries about the magical sword Excalibur. Yes, it really exists. However, obtaining it is another matter.

First, it doesn't show up until very far into the game. Then, a dinosaur is involved. Finally, the chance that the sword will show up as a treasure is very small; if I had to bet on whether you'd get the sword or Strike Commander will be out by Christmas '92, I'd put my money on Strike Commander. Come to think of it, though, I'm not sure I'd care to bet on either one of those (grin).

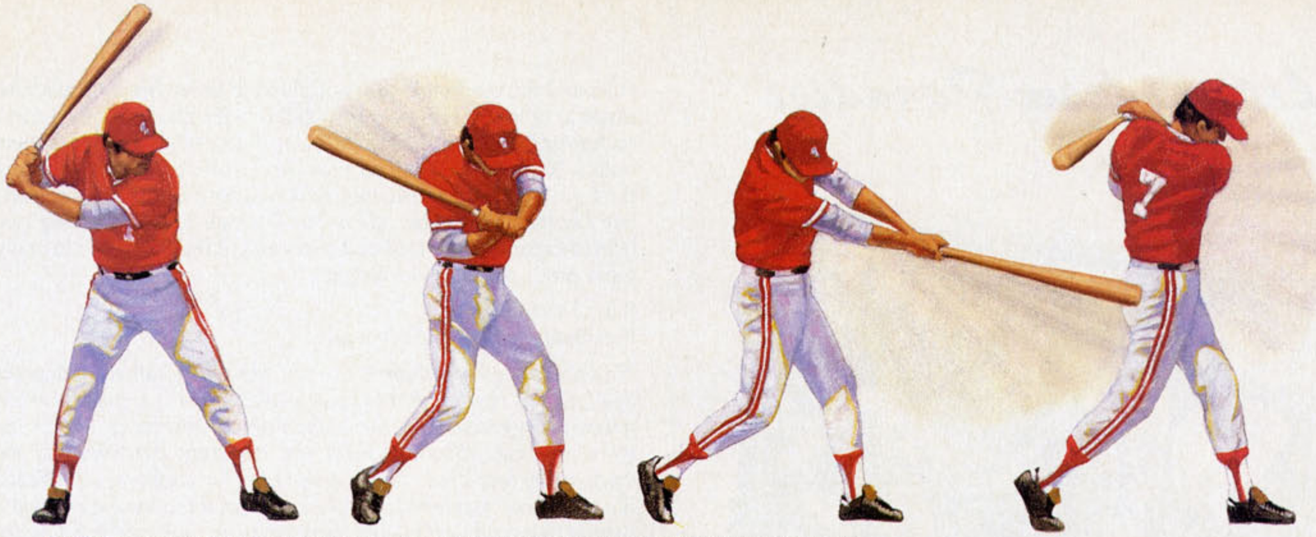
That's it for this look into the mail bag. In the meantime, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu).

On GEnie: Stop by the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT).

By US Mail (enclose that SASE if you live in the United States!): Scorpia, P.O. Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! CGW



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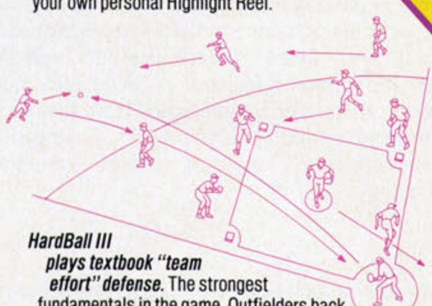
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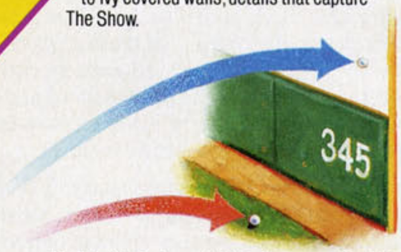
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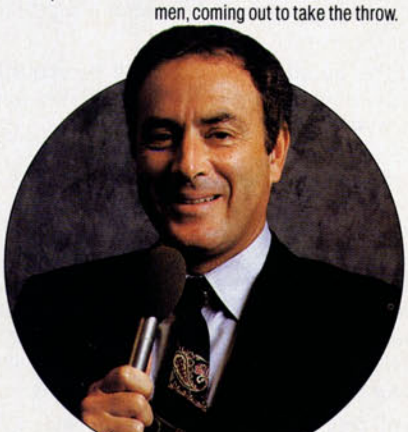
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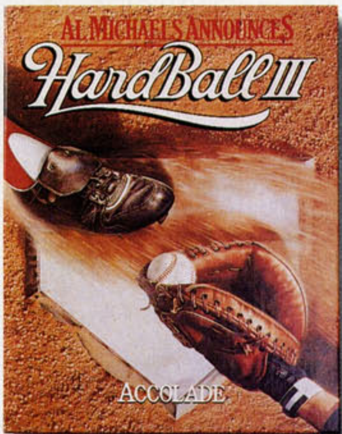
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Letters from Paradise



Prognosis for Phobos Phobia

It was with mixed emotions that I read your review of Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2. It seems clear to me that you must be among those who long for the good old days when films were black and white, comic books were a dime and you could get an American-made gas guzzler with a distinct personality, meticulously designed tail lights and a grill reminiscent of a gargantuan grin. Mind you there is nothing wrong with any of these bits of memorabilia or those who long for yesteryear. In fact, thanks to this faithful band, both *The Lost Treasures of Infocom* and the latest release of *Volume 2* of these classics are selling extremely well. Those products are well-written, contain imagery that can be best visualized via the printed word and have stood the test of time. But sadly, the merry band that was Infocom can no longer be supported with such text adventures.

Excerpting from your commentary, I found that you properly recognized that our 1990s version of Steve Meretzky's original hit did still provide the user with the option of playing the part of either a male or female protagonist, had an interface that was "intuitive and unambiguous" and "includes the most ambitious speech support effort ever packed into an entertainment product." Not bad, I'd say. In addition, you also pointed out, quite correctly, that the game package includes the *LifeSize Sound Enhancer*, a device that requires no additional computer hardware and provides high-quality digitized audio.

Our goal is to appeal to the expert users, such as yourself, while at the same time to make a contribution to the movement to broaden the marketplace for interactive entertainment and to attempt to entice those who have, to date, held out and not purchased a computer with products that will appeal and not be quite so difficult to install, play and successfully complete. To find a happy medium between these two honorable goals is admittedly difficult. Our subsequent products may well be more acceptable to the former camp. However, to continue to provide text adventures at a time when the medium is becoming increasingly more visual would be a mistake, in our opinion. To provide a graphic adventure with puzzles that are obtuse, at a time when novices are beginning, albeit slowly, to enter the marketplace would be counterproductive to the industry's goals. Analogously, I personally avoid, at all costs, the crossword puzzles from the *Manchester Guardian* because they are so abstruse and difficult.

I can appreciate your recollections about the old days when Infocom was king, when graphics in 256 colors (or more) didn't exist and the marketplace was limited to those hearty souls who loved to type and tirelessly responded to the admonition, "I don't understand that word," but that was 8 years ago and those were books. Now we're doing movies. And while many people prefer the former, we are confident that it will be multi-media products like *Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2* which will, in the long run, help to expand the base of end-users and ultimately result in many more products being developed.

Peter Doctorow
President, Activision/Infocom

We think mixed emotions is exactly what the Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2 *review should have evoked. It was a mixed review which recognized both the technological advances within the game without affirming what the reviewer perceived as the trade-off of less-challenging game play for audio-visual effects. We trust your reasoned response will underscore the rationale behind that trade-off and encourage those looking for a simpler style graphic adventure to give it a try.*

Essaying Forth

Essay question? Cite specific examples? Be specific? Wow, a computer gaming magazine with a sense of humor — Who'd have thunk it?

John Hamilton
State College, PA

John gets a big A+ for being the first reader to recognize that the essay question (at the end of CGW *#97's questions for the* CGW *Poll) was intended to be humorous. Fortunately, he wasn't the only* CGW *reader to recognize the humor in the question. Unfortunately, some readers were offended. Interestingly, we received some fascinating answers. So, here follows the results of the "final exam" for* CGW Poll #97.

I am now comparing and contrasting my two favorite computer games, while paying particular attention to the archetypes of each given genre, the distinctive styles of each designer and the contribution of each to the technological and social advancement of the hobby. I am also citing specific examples from historical milestones within the genre and am analyzing why these games are watershed accomplishments. I am being specific. I am now comparing and contrasting...

Henry Poyker
Brooklyn, NY

Our first temptation was to flunk Henry for simply vomiting the faculty's words back to us. Then, we decided that we were vain enough to be flattered and gave him an A for answering in the spirit of the question.

Are you serious about this question? Sounds a bit pompous to me. Let's face it, this is entertainment, not a new philosophy. We're *not* creating a new world order.

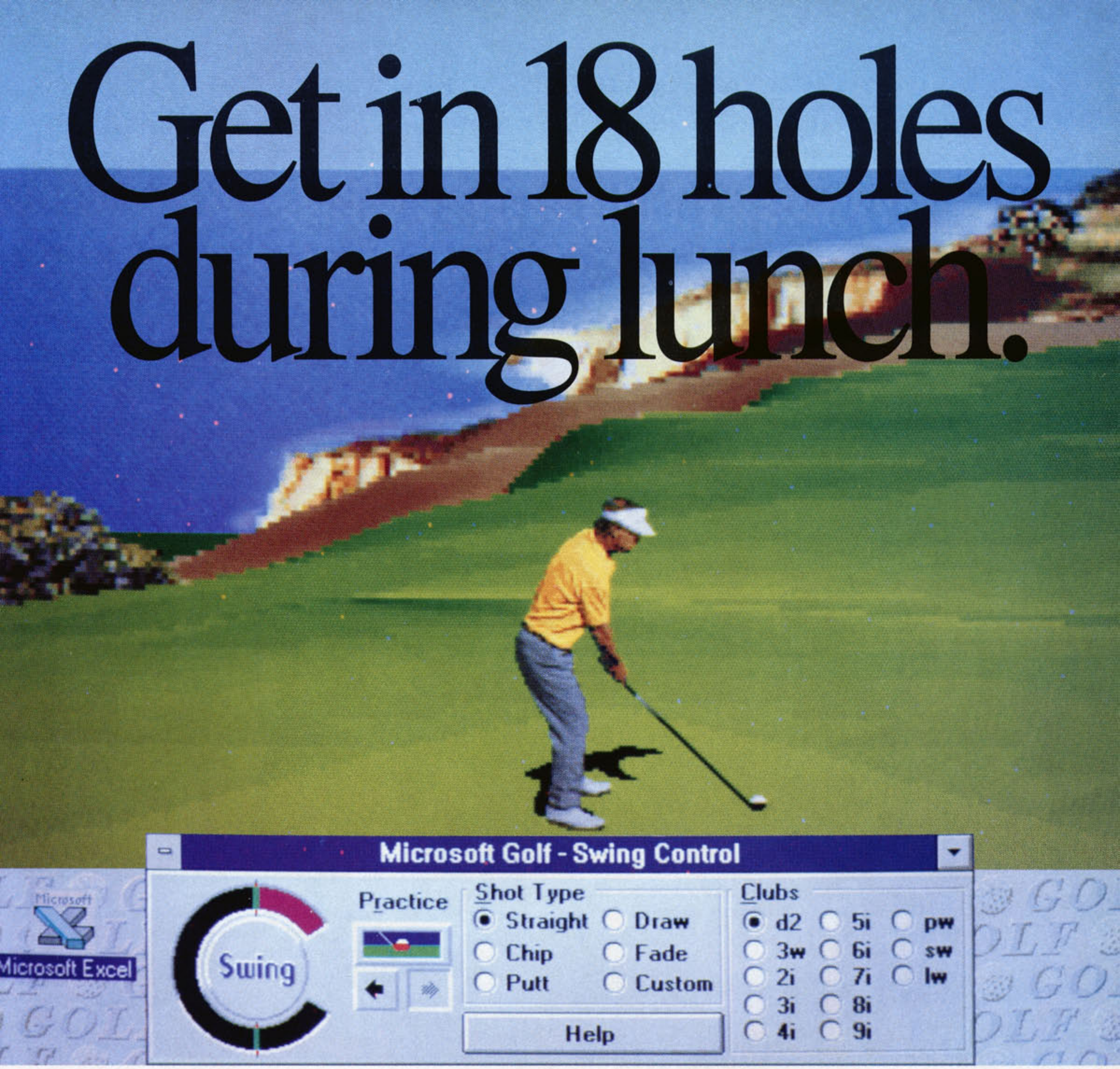
Jim Yencer
Fairborn, OH

No, we weren't serious. Yes, it was intended to sound pedantic, if not pompous. Yes, the primary purpose of computer games is to entertain, but we disagree with the underlying assertion that these are just games. See the editorial in this issue for some other thoughts on this matter. Good thing you took the course Pass/Fail, since you disagreed with the faculty. Fortunately, you bought the magazine and that guaranteed a passing grade.

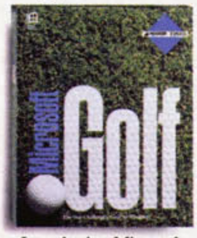
Your question number 60 on CGW Poll #97 is too demanding. If you want this kind of information, how about a contest? It's bad enough that you already don't give anything to readers who fill out these polls which you feature in your magazine.

Bob Schreur
Portage, MI

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Circle Reader Service #84

Bob, I'm afraid we can't recommend you for graduate studies in CGW Humor. We have submitted your essay to the Reader Relations Department, however, and it has resulted in a prize for this issue's question.

My favorite computer games are *Lemmings*, which encompasses Ralph Waldo Emerson's sentiments of "Returning Home" along with motifs of "Death of a Salesman" and Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism and *Links*, which is about golf.

Anonymous
Buffalo, NY

We regret to inform you that we are deeply suspicious of plagiarism, since your answer sounds like one of our editor's more pompous editorials. Well, we'll give you an honorary doctorate, anyway. He's not bright enough to catch you.

My favorite games are *Civilization* and *Ultima Underworld*. Because I said so!

Jim Eckart
Rochester, NY

Well, that's good enough for us.

My two favorite games so far have been *Civilization* and *Revenge of Doh*. I have not studied the history of games or played games long enough to tackle your essay question. Suffice to say, both games are challenging, well-presented, and very playable.

James Logan
Stamford, CT

James, you'll obviously have to take several months out of your life and undertake a course in remedial computer gaming if you want to get higher than a B+ on this essay. If this grade was important enough to you, you know you'd do it. James? James? Just kidding, James.

In a vein of seriousness, we wish to thank everyone who responded to the question in any manner. We may publish some of the longer responses in a later issue.

Recharted Waters

I enjoyed the article on *Uncharted Waters* in your May issue. It was a good article, but here are a couple of addenda to assist with the frustration factors.

First, to gain port loyalty to Portugal, use many repetitive investments. Twenty to twenty-five $1,000 investments will produce a 100% alliance potential whereas one $60,000 investment only produces about a 17% alliance rating.

Second, the shipyard at Naples will have to receive at least five $60,000 investments before it will allow the player to obtain heavy galleons.

Third, keeping as many ports allied to Portugal as possible reduces the economic factors of Spain and Turkey, reducing their capacity for both offensive and merchant operations.

Fourth, it is a good idea to recruit Conrad and Americus early. Build their loyalty to 100% and release them. They will stay friendly and helpful in later quests.

I agree with Mr. Arneson's analysis of the game. I had hoped for a superior version of *Pirates* and got great potential unfulfilled. Perhaps, **Koei** will come out with an *Uncharted Waters II*.

Dr. Frank R. McGinity
Baltimore, MD

We also suggest that anyone interested in colonial conquest and economic management games take the time to read Dave Arneson's sneak preview of **RAW Entertainment***'s upcoming Spoils of War, starting on page 126 of this issue.*

Is It Just A Game?

I have two points to make. First, I've purchased your magazine for the better part of a year now and recently subscribed in December. After purchasing the December issue, I must say that I picked the right computer game magazine to subscribe to.

I missed the review of *Xenocide* and have not seen the game, but I must applaud your efforts to look beyond the surface of games and examine the social implications of them. Anyone who doubts the importance of doing so need merely take a look at the sick games spewing forth out of Germany. I'm sure you know exactly what games I am referring to. I hope that such games do not make their way to the United States and I certainly hope that your magazine never gives them an iota of recognition. I doubt very much that *Xenocide* approaches the low of these games, but thank you for alerting your readers to the implications of games.

Second, would it be possible for you to ask/tell your advertisers to differentiate between MCGA (320x200x256) and 256 color VGA (640x480x256)? Too often, the advertise "256 color VGA," when in fact it is MCGA (for example, *Wing Commander* and *Eye of the Beholder*). As an alternative, maybe you could have a running list in the magazine of games reviewed, showing their true top-end resolution, sound support, CPU really required and other "listable," vital information.

Oren A. Levy
Davis, CA

We hope that batting .500 is satisfactory. As you will notice in this month's editorial, we expect to continue considering the moral, philosophical and social implications of games. As for the questions of resolution, let's be honest. MCGA is a subset of VGA and is compatible with a VGA card. So, computer game publishers consider MCGA resolution to be within the lowest percentile requirements for listing a product as VGA on their stickers. Since all of the companies use this lowest percentile benchmark for their labels, no one company is going to unilaterally change their labels and provide their competition with an advantage. Most marketing departments fear that such truth in labeling would mean that customers would purchase Captain Zombie and the Glucose Smashers *from* **Benedictine Software** *because it had VGA on the label as opposed to their own Dan Quayle "Foot in Mouth" Aerobics Workout with an MCGA label. We haven't made the distinction because the resolution seems largely irrelevant to game play and even, to some extent, game value. We would personally prefer excellently rendered artwork in MCGA mode to mediocre graphics in VGA resolution. We know the potential is greater in the latter, but do not assume that the quality is necessarily greater therein.*

Bird of Interplay

Allen Greenberg's "John Carter of Interplay" is pompous garbage. I have finished *Out of This World* and have one question: Why did **Interplay** "give us the bird" after a spectacular final sequence — ruining an otherwise very good game?

Bradford William Yules
Humble, TX

Interplay's *Vince DeNardo says that the sequence (where the player's character mounts a giant bird and flies away) was designed to match the soaring spirit of those players who finish this epic quest. Now, that's marketing! Of course, more cynical gamers would suggest that it sets up a sequel and might allow Interplay to "feather" their nest with a future success. As for Greenberg's article, we find his "garbage" to have more nutrients than the so-called "entrees" of less thoughtful reviewers. We thought his introduction was appropriate in setting the stage for the game and as a result, was both interesting and informative.* CGW

Trade Up!

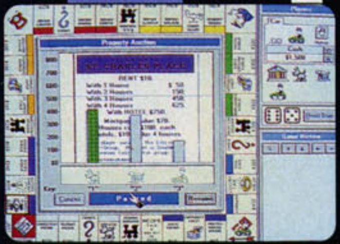
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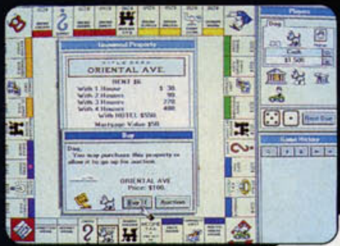
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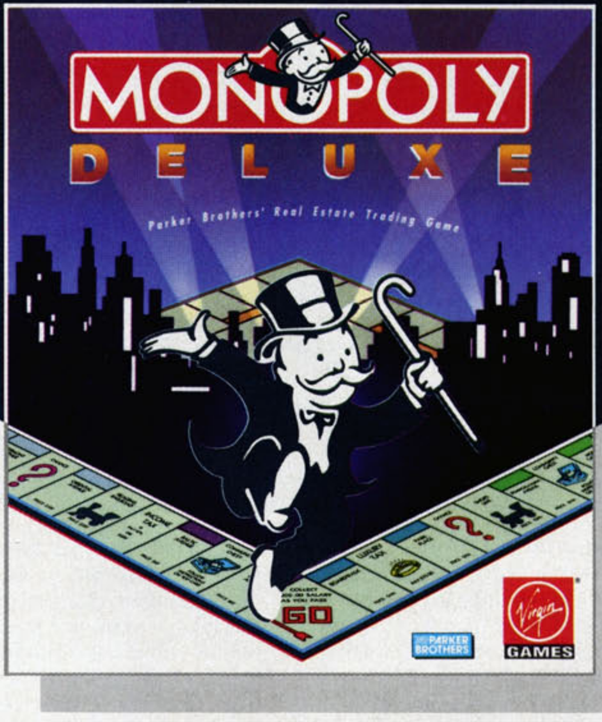
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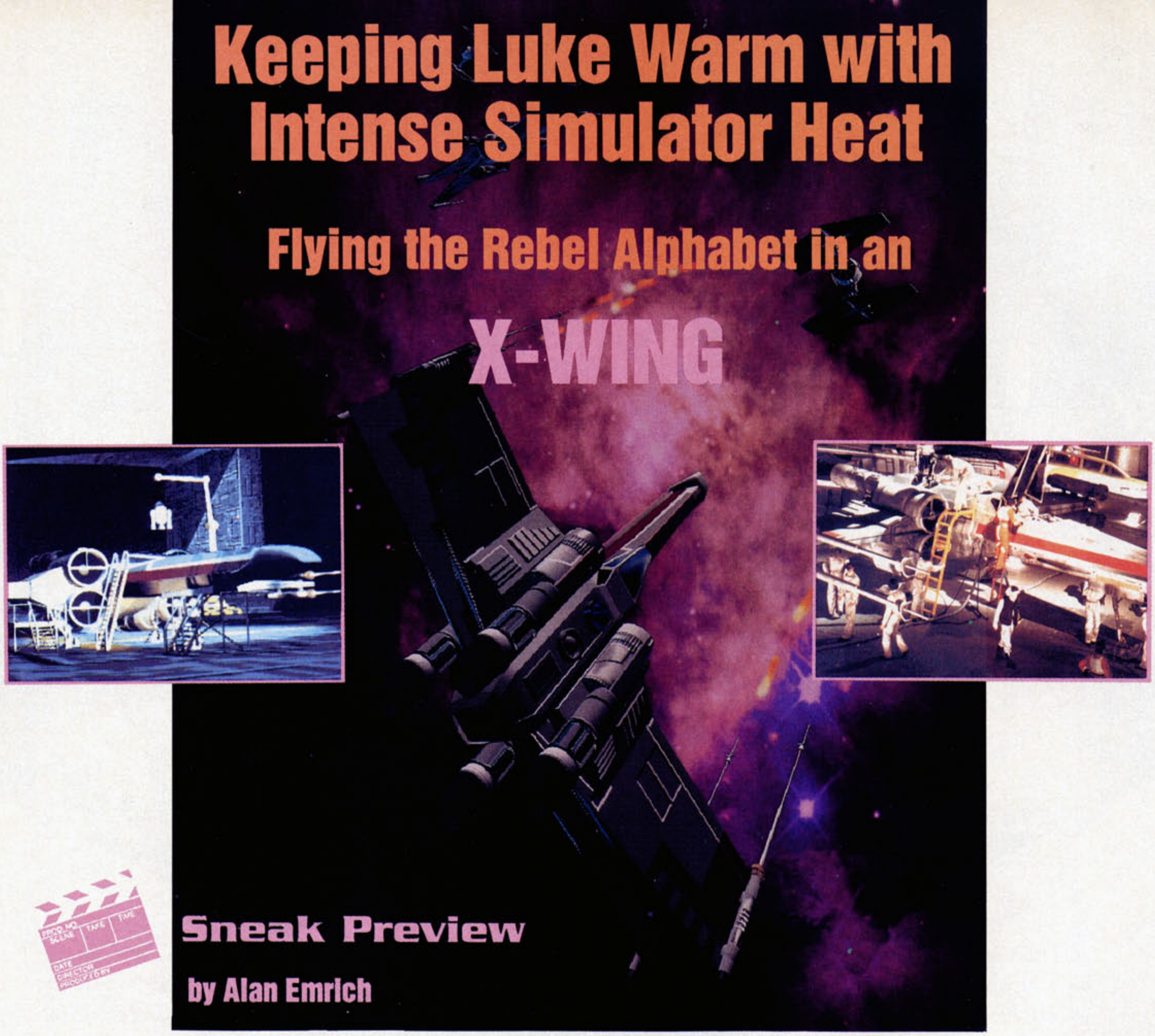
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Circle Reader Service #121

Keeping Luke Warm with Intense Simulator Heat

Flying the Rebel Alphabet in an X-WING



Sneak Preview

by Alan Emrich

I remember when kids used to grow up at the behest of the marketing department of **Lucasfilm**. *Star Wars* was all the rage in the late 70s and early 80s and nary a kid could go to bed without donning *Star Wars* pajamas and tripping on a few *Star Wars* figures in the dark as they climbed into bed and slept between their *Star Wars* sheets with visions of light sabers and X-Wing fighters dancing in their heads. Actually, most people reading this whose age is in double digits grew up with the *Star Wars* mythos and can (much to the annoyance of others who have lost touch with their youth) recite bits of dialogue from the many memorable scenes of that unforgettable first film. How many times while playing a flight sim have joystick jocks heard a little voice in their head saying "Stay on target," or "They're coming in too fast!" from the famous trench scenes on the Death Star?

The original *Star Wars* (subtitled "Episode IV - A New Hope") blew the lid off of high-tech science fiction as a genre, turning it from pulp to pop and making such a fortune at the box office that, among other things, it set George Lucas free to set up companies to develop products in an industry other than film. One such company was **Lucasfilm Games** (*nows*) **LucasArts Games**, founded in 1982 with a $1,000,000 grant from **Atari**. Making good computer games, however, takes more than money. Good ideas and the talent to implement them are every bit as important and, for that, George Lucas set up his Skywalker Ranch in northern California.

Skywalker Ranch is a retreat for the rising stars George Lucas has gathered for everything from film production to sound effects engineering to computer game production. While Indiana Jones has been carving his niche as a youth on TV, as the resourceful hero of the movies and in computer adventure games, little has been done with the *Star Wars* license (in terms of disk-based computer games). *Star Wars* has moved inexorably from pop to nostalgia. Like the old soldiers they are, Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi and Princess Leah seem to be fading away.

The fourth grade and under crowd has never seen a new *Star Wars* movie release. Many are far more familiar with ninja turtle heroes Michelangelo and Leonardo fighting the evil Shredder than with Luke and Han Solo stopping the evil Darth Vader. To counterpoint this sense of absence, however, NBC brought in amazingly high ratings for their July '92 showings of both *The Empire Strikes Back* (a 10.6 rating with a 19 share) and *The Return of the Jedi* (an 11.6 rating with a 21 share), meaning that interest in the Galactic Empire and Rebel Alliance is not dead, merely dormant as we wait for the next *Star Wars* movie. (I thought the product slippage was bad in the software industry until I realized it might be *another* ten years before the next *Star Wars* movie comes out). Based on these television ratings, many people still trust "the force." Armed with these facts and the knowledge that *Wing Commander* has been sitting at the top

of the computer gaming charts for a long time, **LucasArts Games** is adapting their *Star Wars* license to fly straight on at "Blue Hair" and the Kilrathi. This time, the space duels will take place in *X-Wing: The Star Wars Space Combat Simulator*.

A Long Time Ago, In Galaxy Far, Far Away...

Without mincing words, Larry (*Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*) Holland and Ed (*RoboSport*) Kilham are taking aim at Chris Roberts and his megahit *Wing Commander* series in the same way that a sniper takes aim through a rifle scope. *X-Wing* isn't out to blaze a new high-end technology path, but to follow it in an attempt to excel beyond its illustrious predecessor. Where *Wing Commander* set out to give players a feel for *Star Wars*, *X-Wing* is now bringing the circle full around by trying to use the *Star Wars* genre to "out *Wing Commander*" *Wing Commander*. Pilots, to your fighters! The real "star wars" are about to begin.

Hard to *SWOTL*?

While *X-Wing* is a game fought in the vacuum of space, it cannot be considered in a vacuum without comparisons between itself and the reigning emperor of computer entertainment, *Wing Commander*. There is one major philosophical difference between the two games, however, that must be constantly kept in mind (and one which makes perfect sense when considering the strengths of the design team for *X-Wing*). Where *Wing Commander* is an action game wrapped around a non-interactive movie, *X-Wing* is more of a flight simulator fleshed out with some interactive transition scenes. Although *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* is *not* the model for *X-Wing* (which is odd, considering the movie combat sequences are all based on WWII aerial combat footage), the cut and thrust of the design is simulation over arcade game.

The question is, what kind of "simulator" can you have for star fighter combat? If Newtonian physics were the rule, counter-thrust would have to be meticulously applied in order to stop a ship, which could, theoretically, glide, roll and drift into space indefinitely. Another problem that would have to be overcome is the disorienting lack of sound or "horizons" in space combat.

Granted, all of these elements have been factored out of the flight simulation equation for the sake of playability (not to mention fun) and, while there's still no sense of gravity in the flight model, there is definitely more of a flight sim feel to the maneuvers one can perform, particularly when rolling the fighter through turns (i.e., there is more of a sense of "banking" while turning than in *Wing Commander*). Several artificial "horizons" (such as large ships) may be available on screen, but players will have to contend with being at multiple angles, which can lead to an interesting sense of disorientation of a different sort. Even the "braking" systems and other "anti-Newtonian" elements will be an automatic function of the game's engine and not something the player will have to deal with consciously.



The key to this "flight sim philosophy" is the extensive use of polygons in *X-Wing*. With the many advances in polygon technology, more can be crammed onto a screen and memory restriction/processing time corners can be more effectively cut while maintaining clarity levels in order to manipulate more and more polygons at an ever increasing frame rate. The practical upshot of all this for gamers is to see more and better defined polygon images (since they are being made up of several polygons each) which maneuver in a smoother scrolling fashion. Consider the look of a "film" repiay in *Wing Commander II* and notice how each ship seems to fly and shoot with exacting, octagonal precision — this will not be the case in *X-Wing*. Each mission will end with a *complete* film replay (a la *SWOTL*) for your viewing pleasure, which can be manipulated and stored for repeated viewing.

Joining the Rebellion

Players do not begin a game of *X-Wing* as another Luke Skywalker. Instead, one is recruited into the Rebel Alliance after hearing the stirring speech of Mon Mothma at a rally. As a raw recruit out to overthrow imperial tyranny and restore the Old Republic, one must prove his or her mettle as a pilot before flying in combat. This segues into the first third of the game, which consists of obstacle courses and training missions with plenty of lessons and reenactments of "historical" battles. Sadly, while obviously intended as a raucous introduction into the *X-Wing* system, many of the hard core joystick jocks will probably poo-poo this segment of the game entirely. This would be a shame, however, as the design team is taking special care to make this a particularly challenging set of missions against the clock and increasing pressure from enemy targets. In effect, this is the "arcade" part of *X-Wing* and one which could *almost* stand on its own.

This combination of the pilot's proving ground (for flying skills) and the Combat School (for target practice) is geared for each of the three mainstay Rebel Alliance fighter types, the A-Wing (the "economy model" outpost fighter), the Y-Wing (a medium "fighter-bomber") and the ultimate, X-Wing (death dealing fighter supreme). Both the X and Y-Wing fighters require the assistance of a Droid (like an R2 unit) to assist in plotting courses, jumps and making repairs. Players in A-Wing fighters will have to conduct these duties themselves (which could prove wonderfully stressful in the heat of battle).

Blueprints for Flying

As previously mentioned, the ships themselves are multiple polygons. The cockpit and interior images of a fighter are bit mapped, however. Also bit mapped will be numerous special effects (explosions, etc.) and the transition scenes. These transitions between scenes take place not on the *Tiger's Claw*, but on the Calamari Star Cruiser, *Dreadnought* and at a Calamari space port. (For the record, the Calamari play a very large role in *X-Wing*, and the squid jokes were flying fast and furious as the game was being developed.)

While at these friendly locations, players will try to earn their "ratings" for better fighters, receive mission assignments and briefings, check out fighter blueprints, watch films or join one of the three "combat tours" (mission series). In actual flying, save for the nuances of a more "flight sim" feel to the controls, *X-Wing* has a very *Wing Commander*-like feel to it. Quick reflexes and straight shooting will make a pilot effective, while smart play will make him deadly. Moving from a Rapier to an X-Wing will not be a shocking transition for players.

Smart play comes, as it so often does, from becoming "one with" the instrumentation (by using "the force," no doubt). To that end, players familiar with the radar scope on *Wing Commander* will have to make some adjustments (both figuratively and literally). *Two* radar scopes will appear, one in each of the upper corners of the HUD (Heads Up Display). The default settings for these are to put the "forward" sphere on the left and the "reward" sphere on the right. Players can, however, customize these half-globe spheres to be top and bottom, left and right or any combination they choose.

It's Darth in Here

Naturally, the game will have full sound support and will be competing with *Wing Commander* in the use of digitized voices. A subdued soundtrack will play throughout the game but the sounds of combat will be a little different (taken, as much as possible, from the films). Even one's R2 unit will screech and beep with information

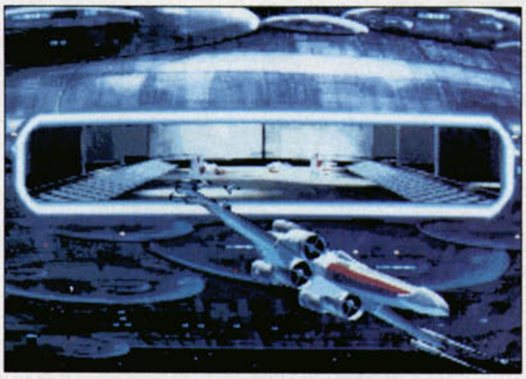
(printed out in plain English along the bottom of the screen). Players can communicate back to their R2 unit and comrade pilots in a 2-menu approach similar to *Wing Commander*. Hopefully, in *X-Wing*, single keystroke hot keys or programmable macros will be added to allow players to perform these crucial tasks more quickly and efficiently than was done in its spiritual predecessor.

Also, during combat, a certain amount of "background chatter" will be ongoing over one's "com," adding a nice measure of intensity to stimulate a player's audio senses and give an added sense of really "being there" in battle. Players do not communicate with their base during missions, nor is fuel ever a concern (despite "jumping" to and from a battle site). Unlike *Wing Commander*, multiple "nav points" are *not* on the mission roster.

What Becomes a Rebellion Most

Life is no picnic for the Rebel Alliance at the outset of the *X-Wing* story. Critically short of everything but courage, *X-Wing* picks up with the first of the three "tours of duty" (Hmm, shades of *SWOTL*) as an immediate "prequel" situation to the first *Star Wars* film. It's guerrilla tactics time with the object being, not merely to destroy everything in *site* (pun intended), but to collect everything which the rebellion might find useful. In other words, "hit-and-run" operations are the first order of business and a primary focus of the early game.

Players start off as no hero, either. Instead, one begins as a mere "cog in the machine," following orders and leading missions of little consequence. Upon returning to base, a variety of greetings might take place. Various levels of the generic "glad to see you" screen, accented with differing degrees of enthusiasm based on one's mission success will be the norm. This could range from a near-reprimand to delirious ovations and a "medal" ceremony (a la the end of *Star Wars*). Limping home in an X-Wing shaped hunk of Swiss cheese might have a player evacuated to the medical tank (as seen at the beginning of *The Empire Strikes Back*) while ejecting might mean either drifting off forever into space, being rescued by the Rebel Alliance or the Empire (followed by horrendous torture conducted by the Dark Lord of the Sith himself). Of course, many times a mission will end (before being replayed again, that is) with the traditional "flame and burn" death-by-fireball sequence (done in a variety of ways by the gruesome graphics gurus who revel in such things). This, naturally, is followed by the "burial at space" as our hero's corpse burns up forever in the atmosphere of a nearby planet (unless, of course, one is Mr. Spock — but that's a different idiom).



That's not the AT&T Logo, That's a Death Star!

The second tour of duty involves stealing the plans to the Empire's rumored new "secret weapon." Deploying probes, intercepting Imperial ships, rendezvousing with spies and other cloak-and-dagger missions abound as the player ultimately tracks down the blueprints of their impending doom. For those who are interested, the storyline will probably work out to about 15% "from the movies" and 85% original (albeit parallel), but keeping the universe correct and maintaining strict continuity. Thus, one will not feel like they are playing a pre-traveled, linear adventure game type of plot through the three tours, however familiar things might appear to *Star Wars* movie fans.

Fortunately, the last of the tours of duty has much to do with undermining the Emperor's "technological terror." Not surprisingly, it ends with a stirring recreation of the climactic fight above, and in the trenches of, the Death Star itself. While most players may not have "bull's-eyed wamp rats with their T-16s back home," like Luke Skywalker did, by the time they reach that fateful exhaust port on the Death Star (in just the nick of time, of course) the adrenaline will be pumping mightily and the reward will be truly worth it.

Hide the Mirrors

While playing, one does not meet a good many of the primary Star Wars characters. Don't expect to run into Luke, Han, Leah or Obi-Wan any time soon. Oh, one will *hear* of their deeds (thus providing a good degree of continuity with the films), but don't expect to rub elbows with the stars (in a manner of speaking). While players will encounter many of the "minor" pilot characters (such as Deak, Dack and Biggs), the player most conspicuously absent will be one's own self! Yes, unlike "Blue Hair" from the *Wing Commander* series, one never sees what their character looks like and is only ever referred to in the game by the player's name selected. Thus, not only is *X-Wing* gender non-specific, it is also *alien race* non-specific (for those who thought a Wookie couldn't fit in one of those tiny A-Wings, well... now they can!). Thus, **LucasArts** killed the two birds of painting more graphics and staying "politically correct" with this one stone.

To make sure that players can get into the game's fiction, a 96-page, paperback novella by Rusel DeMaria will be included in the package (along with a more sparse set of documentation than seen in other **LucasArts** flight simulators, such as those found in *Their Finest Hour* and *SWOTL*). This novella will primarily be focused on the hardware and technical aspects of being a Rebel Fighter Pilot, with a bit of fiction thrown in to weave the plot together (not unlike *The Claw Marks*). For the collector of *Star Wars* memorabilia, this book will only be released in copies of *X-Wing*.

One-Sided Affairs

Players will *only* be allowed to fly for the Rebel Alliance in *X-Wing*. Furthermore, the rebels have only the A-Wing, Y-Wing and X-Wing fighters to choose from. For those who aspire to the Imperial service, they will have to wait for whatever "sequel" products might ensue, depending on the success of *X-Wing*. In my opinion, sequel products will be a certainty. *X-Wing* is likely to be a fully supported product, complete with add-ons and game modules. The engine is being designed to easily incorporate campaign editors, mission builders, new ship technologies and all of these other things you can buy separately (over and over again) once "hooked" into the product line.

"Ex-Wing" Commanders?

Many of us left the movie theaters in the Summer of 1977 with the dream of flying an X-Wing fighter and saving the galaxy like our new-found hero, Luke Skywalker did. Sensing that the time is right (and the market is safe), LucasArts is finally giving IBM computer owners their chance as they aim for a hopeful Christmas release. Switch all power to front deflector screens, kids. We're going in and we're going in *full throttle*. (That should keep those fighter's off our backs!)

Although *X-Wing* is clearly aimed at **Origin**'s *Wing Commander* series, I don't think the Texas-based company will have to worry too much (one can almost hear Chris Roberts' impression of Imperial Governer Moff Tarkin saying "Evacuate? In our moment of triumph? I think you overestimate their chances."). Well, *X-Wing*'s chances are good — *very* good. However, I believe that this galaxy is big enough for two outstanding tactical space fighter combat games. Frankly, when the Rebel Alliance recruiter comes to Earth, it shouldn't be too hard for experienced wing commanders to "force" themselves into an *X-Wing*. (Say, whose voice is that which keeps telling me to switch off my targeting computer, anyway?) CGW



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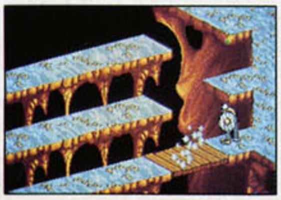
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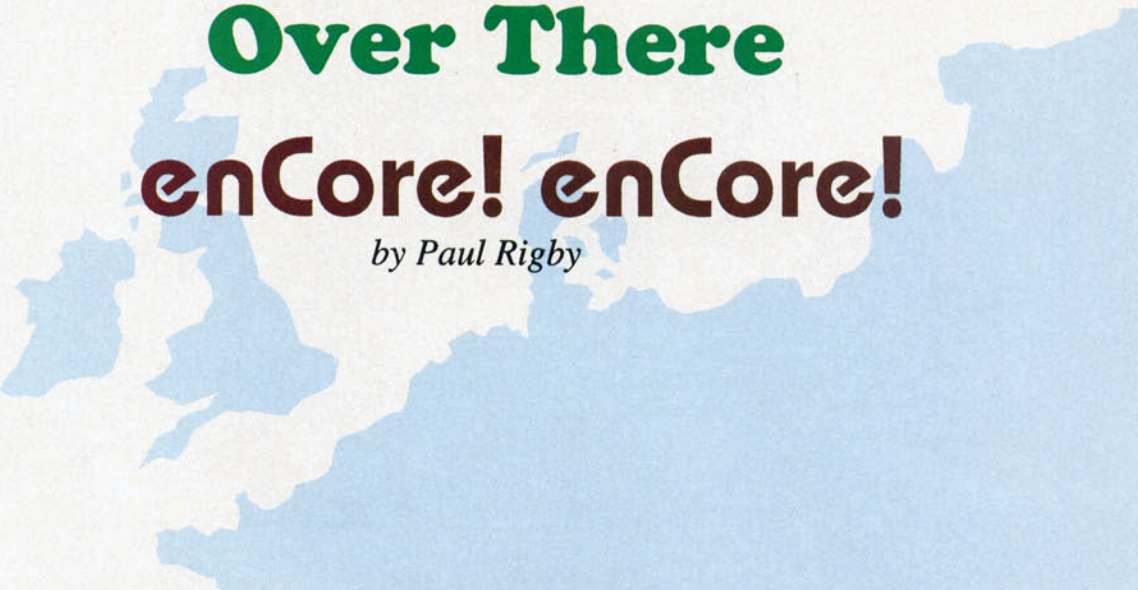
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Over There

enCore! enCore!

by Paul Rigby



UK programmers continue their assault on the graphical adventure scene (**Revolution/Virgin UK**'s *Lure of the Temptress* has already been mentioned within these pages). **Core** plans to get in on the act with its very first graphic adventure — *Curse of the Enchantia.* **Core**'s Ian Sabine, who is working on the PC version of Curse, dived straight in with a rough description of what the game is all about,

"It is an icon-operated graphical adventure. You take the part of a twentieth century kid who has just been transported off to this magical world. The idea is that a witch needs a young boy as an ingredient in a rejuvenation potion — *you* are the unlikely target. Once you get there the witch has you taken off to the dungeons where you are to be held (upside down in manacles) until she is ready for the spell."

The aim of the game is to (surprise!) kill the witch and dash back to one's own time. The game follows the classic design format. That is, the player sees a series of scenes, connected together with horizontal scrolling sections. Of course, the player's on-screen will be able to walk deeper into the screen as scaling characters will be included. This should provide a more realistic effect such as that utilized so effectively in *LeChuck's Revenge: Secret of Monkey Island II.*

The most unique aspect of the game is the interaction interface. In the world of graphic adventures, this one area has caused more arguments and consternation than any other. There is the **Sierra** approach whereby clicking on Talk allows the character to gibber away without any player control at all. Then, at the opposite end of the scale, there is the complicated parser effort which warrants the "hunt the right word to get a character to do anything" approach. **Core** have taken a unique approach to the problem by tackling interaction in two ways. The most interesting innovation in this game is that the characters in the game talk in a graphic format.

"There is a shopkeeper in the lakebed, explained Ian, "selling oxygen. The only way for him to tell you that he wants a worm without actually spelling it out in so many words is to produce a speech-type 'bubble' from the character with a worm inside it. We could say 'worm = oxygen'."

So, everyone talks in pictures. Weird, eh? The programmers have also stated that the lack of text speeds up gameplay. One other point that **Core** is shouting about with regard to *Curse* is the size of their product (the gameplay, not the box),

"It's going to be twice as big as any **Sierra** game in every respect. We really like playing **Sierra** games, but we solve them very quickly. We wanted our game to be larger and offer a lot more enjoyment."

Screams in the Dark is not the bedtime realization that you've failed to renew your CGW subscription but, rather, the new Cthulhu-based game from **Infogrames**. Slated for a pre-Christmas release on the IBM, *Screams* reminds me of an *Eternam* or even an *Out of This World*-type product as the game world is totally polygon driven with a variety of interesting and movie-like camera angles. An arcade/adventure with a difference, *Screams* is based in the old manor house, Derceto, where the resident owner, a painter, has committed suicide. The player chooses one of two characters to find out if the suicide was *really* the cause of death. The after-dark roaming of the Cthulhu-like monsters and demons are likely to convince the player otherwise. The game includes object-oriented puzzles interspersed with arcade sub-games.

Ancient Rome seems to be in vogue. In addition to **Impression**'s example mentioned last month, **Millennium,** creators of *Global Effect*, are working on a new game based on the *Empire* of old. Starting as a lowly slave, the player must achieve recognition and reward in rising to the heights of Caesar. Many adventures are in the offing: in Herculaneum, Hector must find a means of gaining passage off the island before the volcano erupts; in Britannica, he must lead his troops to defeat the ancient Britons. Rome features a point and click interface. Available on the IBM and Amiga in October.

Russell Ferrier, in charge of CD development at the UK software house **Domark** (until recently), described **Domark**'s latest CDTV product — *Trivial Pursuit,*

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"For CD, *Trivial Pursuit* (which will be released on two disks) we did no amount of porting, shovelling or dumping. We went right back to the origins of the game itself and looked at the nature of it."

"We started with new questions. Then, we wondered how we could flaunt the capabilities of CD. We felt, with the home market we are aiming for, that the CD version had to look like a film or TV product. So, we arranged to have a unique, digitized photograph for every one of those questions. There followed an arduous task of finding photo libraries that were, firstly, reasonable in their prices and, secondly, had a good stock of material to select from."

The resultant pictures can be used as clues in *Trivial Pursuit* but are not designed to give away the answer. In some cases they are utilised as red herrings. In addition, Chris Langham was brought in to interject humor into the game. Chris was the script writer for the majority of the Muppet Shows (remember that?) A master of ceremonies (an animated cartoon bird character) was designed who provides interaction with the players (he congratulates, commiserates, chastises and so on). There were 200 of these 'links' between questions to provide the required atmosphere.

Also, every one of the questions are spoken. For each of the six main categories **Domark** created an individual character, in addition to the Master of Ceremonies. For Science/Nature you get Einstein, History — Napoleon, Geography — Columbus, Art/Literature — Shakespeare, Sport/Leisure — Adonis and Entertainment — Mae West. Kate Robbins (impersonator) did the Mae West voice and Patrick Mower (actor of sorts) did the five male voices. The Andre Jacquemin studios (where the *Monty Python* soundtracks were created) were used to record the sound. Sound effects, such as cheering, thunderous applause, etc, are also included. If the player wins the game, the bird goes haywire, falls of his perch and so on. Release is slated for pre-Christmas with IBM-based CD-ROM and CD-I versions in the cards for later release.

Anyone who would like to contact me can do so on **CompuServe** (75300,1503) or by mail to 20 Malvern Road, Liverpool, England, L6 6BW [please include three 'international reply coupons' for a reply].

Note: The above games, and any of the other games mentioned in "Over There" in past issues, can be obtained from:

Computer Adventure World,
318 Kensington, Liverpool, England, L70EY.
Tel: 01144-51-263-6306.

Premier Mail Order,
Trybridge Ltd., 8 Buckwins sq., Burnt Mills,
Basildon, Essex, England, SS13 1BJ.
Tel: 01144-268-590-766 Fax: 01144-268-590-076.

Software City,
Unit 4, BDC, 21 Temple Street, Wolverhampton,
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All of the above telephone numbers assume you can dial direct. If you have any trouble contact the international operator. CGW

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Advance Icon To GO

Toyogo, Inc.'s *Nemesis GO Master*

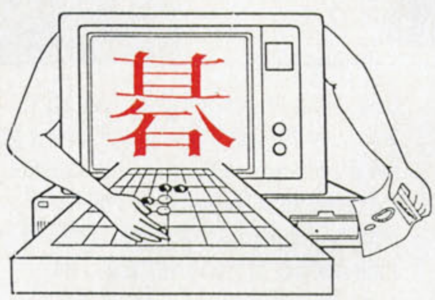
by Timothy J. Trimble

TITLE:	Nemesis GO Master
SYSTEM:	IBM, Macintosh
#PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$69.00
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNERS:	Bruce Wilcox
PUBLISHER:	Toyogo, Inc. P.O. Box 25460 Honolulu, HI

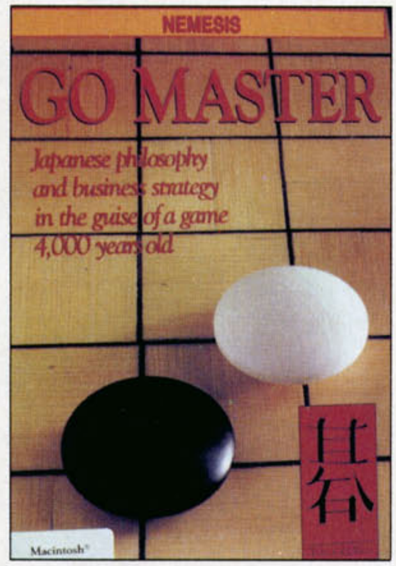
It seems unusual that a game that was invented over 4000 years ago with rocks and scratches in the ground has progressed to the point of being played on a computer system. The game, of course, is called *GO* and it originated with the Japanese, which explains the use of words such as Joseki, Ko, Sente, Seki and Fuseki. Anyone who understands what these words mean is bound to be familiar with the game of *GO* already. Fortunately for those who are not familiar with these words, the game of *GO* is actually easier to understand than the Japanese words associated with the game. It is also fortunate that whether one is a novice or an expert at the game of *GO*, the *Nemesis GO Master* (Version 5.02) [*Nemesis*] from **Toyogo, Inc.** can provide endless hours of enjoyment and education.

Toyogo Does Windows

With their latest version, **Toyogo** has provided support for *Microsoft Windows* with an interface that is very similar to their Macintosh version of the program. The strong point of this interface is the use of an "Icons Window" that contains graphic icons (pictures) to represent various functions of the program such as displaying liberties, current score, patterns, groups and hints. Set-up and editing of the board and playing pieces can also be controlled from the graphic icons. Further, the Icons Window also allows the player to "step" through the tutorials and previously played games. A game clock is also kept in the Icons Window and records the time used by each player (similar to chess clocks). One of the drawbacks of the graphic environment under *Microsoft Windows* is that Toyogo did not take full advantage of the graphic capabilities of Windows. The playing board is a bland black on green and the rest of the screen is black on white.



One of the unique features of *Nemesis* is the use of "books" (disk files) for storing games, tutorials and documentation. In order to save a game a book must be opened or created. Multiple games can be stored in the book. After a book is loaded a table of contents is displayed with a listing of the stored games. Once a stored game is loaded then it can be "stepped" through, one turn at a time. The nice feature about this is the ability to add notes in the message window for each move. The tutorial works in this manner also. The moves can be stepped through with detailed instruction presented in the message window. Along with the built- in tutorial, a booklet called the Instant Go



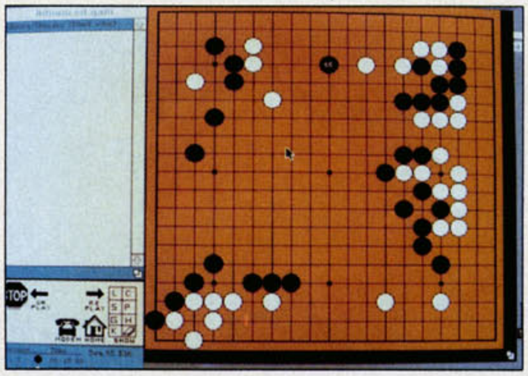
Starter Kit (by Crystalline Creations, Inc. and Bruce Wilcox) is enclosed with the program. This 36 page booklet gives a very clear and illustrative introduction to the how and why of playing GO.

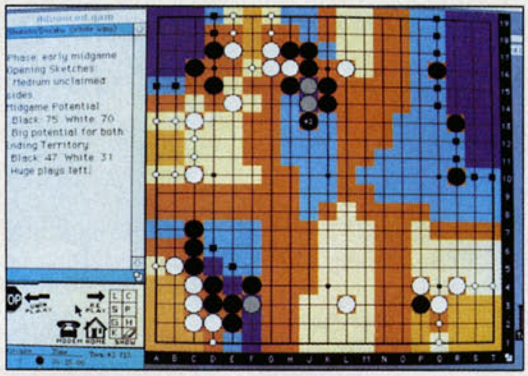
AI Worthy Of Kyudos

Nemesis GO Master does a good job of presenting strong GO playing ability up to a level of 13 kyu. (A beginner is rated at 35 kyu and works toward a rating of 1 kyu. After that ratings are measured as "dan" with 1 dan being the next step after 1 kyu. Top U.S. amateurs are measured at 7 dan.) This rating can be adjusted back to 35 kyu for the beginning player. A handicap can also be assigned to the player by placing from 2 to 9 stones at the beginning of play. In handicapping, Nemesis supports both Japanese (placing handicap stones in fixed locations) and Chinese rules (placing handicap stones anywhere). Outside of handicapping, *Nemesis* also supports other characteristics of both Japanese and Chinese rules.

The configuration portion of *Nemesis* provides a very extensive range of features that can be changed by the player. The board size can be set for 9x9,

13x13 and 19x19 grids. This also affects the playing strength of *Nemesis* since the ratings are based on the 19x19 board and *Nemesis* becomes much weaker with smaller boards. Handicap, playing strengths, time clocks, komi points and various board display features can also be set from the configuration feature. Teaching and wisdom levels can also be set, which provides the player with various levels of input from the program. If wisdom is set to "All Wisdom," then *Nemesis* will display the different playing positions that it is considering before making the next move. Other settings for wisdom are No Motives, No Wisdom and Some Wisdom. The timing of the tactics display can also be set as No Display, Fast Display, Medium Display, Slow Display and Wait at Result. The drawback to this is that there is no way to interrupt the display of the tactics once it has started. If *Nemesis* takes two minutes to display the tactics and thinking of the next move then the player has no way of interrupting and canceling the tactical display for that turn.





For those who are interested in playing with real opponents via a telephone call, *Nemesis* supports the ability to link to another *Nemesis* program through modems. The setup and use of the modem feature is quite painless and easy to use. (For those who are searching for remote opponents — *Nemesis* is supported via the modem lobby on **CompuServe** and players can also be found in the Chess Forum.)

GO for the Gusto

Although gamers who require sterling graphics to draw them into a game may be disappointed, *Nemesis GO Master* has plenty to offer in the way of instruction, competition and satisfaction.Overall, *Nemesis GO Master* is a good program for *both* the beginning and intermediate GO player. CGW





Catch of Two Tales

Capstone's *An American Tail: The Computer Adventures of Fievel and His Friends*

by Judy Muldawer

An American Tail: The Computer Adventures of Fievel and His Friends is actually *two* different computer adventure games based on Steven Spielberg's movies, *An American Tail* and *An American Tail:Fievel Goes West.* The adventures begin at the turn of the century as Fievel Mousekewitz, a young male mouse, and his family flee the Russian cat-cossacks. They sail toward America, a land where they believe there are no felines and the streets are paved with cheese. En route, Fievel is separated from his family, and he finds himself alone, poor, friendless, and lost in a new land. Naturally, the immediate task for the player is to assist Fievel in his quest to locate his loved ones. In the course of doing so, many adventures impose themselves on the computer screen. The player not only has the opportunity to help Fievel locate his family, but he/she gets a chance to save the mice from the cats by using Fievel's special plan. Before reaching this climactic point, however, the player will need to direct Fievel through a veritable scavenger hunt to obtain a variety of objects; an obstacle course of potential trouble; a potpourri of simple, entertaining games; and a gauntlet of intriguing questions to answer. Then, once the first adventure is completed, the player has the opportunity to begin Fievel's trip westward, a new game with a new theme that ends, predictably enough, in an "Old West Showdown."



TITLE:	An American Tale
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$44.95
PROTECT:	None
DESIGNER:	Jonathon Sposato
PUBLISHER:	Capstone Miami, FL

There Are No Cats in Computer Games (Problems)

However, as in any adventure, things don't always go smoothly. Fievel encounters numerous pitfalls as his story unfurls. He must play some difficult games of Concentration, Simon Says, Dots, Shoot Out and others. He has to assemble a jigsaw puzzle without a picture to guide him. He must find the proper exit signs and avoid the inevitable—cats! He learns that he cannot trust every stranger in his new land and that good friends are helpful. So far, so good.

Fortunately, help is available to the youngsters who try to solve this adventure whenever they find themselves lost. Rather than being lost themselves, they can click on the cheese-shaped cursor on Fievel's hat. In addition, the manual includes a hint sheet to assist Fievel in his adventure and provides helpful tips on the various games, as well as solutions to some common problems encountered in Fievel's travels.

Further, although the graphics are excellent replicas of those found in the original movies, the player cannot help Fievel succeed by moving through wordless paths. Good reading skills are a necessity as Fievel meets and must speak with numerous characters. Words such as 'ambitious,' 'discouraged,' 'floundering' and 'souvenir' suggest a reading level beyond most elementary school children's skills. Although a two page vocabulary list, complete with definitions, is also included in the manual, I find it difficult to believe that any child will actually memorize word definitions in order to play a computer game.

The graphics also offer a visual variety of cartoon characters and backgrounds, designed to entrance and mesmerize most any youngster. Unfortunately, the sound implementation does not score the same high marks. Hardly

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A-Train	B
Chrisis in Kremlin	B+
Dune	A
Global Effect	C-
Hardball 3	A+
Heroes of the 357th	C-
Indy Jones Atlantis	A
MicroLeague BB 4	A
Powermonger (IBM)	A-
Prophecy of Shadow	B
Solitaire's Journey	A
Ragnarok	A
Conflict Korea	B+
Siege	A-

ADVENTURE/ROLE PLAY

PAST

	IBM	AMI
Black Crypt	-	34
Castles	36	36
Castles N. Camp.	19	-
Champions Krynn	19	34
Conquest of the Longbow	42	37
Curse Azure Bonds	34	34
Dark Lands	39	-
Dark Queen of Krynn	34	34
Dark Sun	October	-
Dungeon Master	31	31
Eye of Beholder	34	34
Eye of Beholder 2	38	38
Four Crystals of Trazere	34	34
Gatewy Savage Frontier	34	34
Heimdall	32	32
Heroes Quest 3	42	-
Kings Quest 5 VGA	42	39
Kings Quest 6	Sept	-
Legacy of Necromancer	27	-
Legend of Kryandia	37	-
Lord of the Rings	36	36
Lord of the Rings 2	36	-
Magic Candle 2	39	-
Magic Candle 3	October	-
Might & Magic 3	39	39
Might & Magic 4	39	-
M&M CLouds of Xeen	39	-
Merchant Colony	32	-
Pirates Gold	Winter	-
Pool of Radiance	15	15
Pool of Darkness	39	39
Prophecy of the Shadow	39	39
Quest for Glory (New)	22	-
Ragnorok	35	-
Rampart	28	28
Realms	20	Fall
Secret of Monkey Island	37	37
Secret of Monkey Island 2	39	39
Secret Silver Blades	15	34
Shadowlands	33	-
Spoils fo War	37	-
Tales of Magic	39	-
Treasures Savage Frontier	34	34
Ultima 6	42	42
Ultima 7	47	-
Ultima Trilogy 2	47	-
Ultima Underworld	47	-
Uncharted Waters	43	-
Warriors of Legend	20	-
Wizardry 6	39	39
Wizardry 7	42	-

PRESENT

	IBM	AMI
Buzz Aldrin Space	42	-
Crisis in the Kremlin	42	-
D/generation	34	-
Dagger of Amon RA	42	-
Elvira 1	43	43
Elvira 2	43	43
Heart of China	37	37
Indy Jones Atlantis	39	-
K.G.B.	Sep.	Sep.
Leisure Suit Larry 5	42	38
Lost Treas. Infocom	42	42
Oh No! More Lemmings!	22	22
Jaws of Cerberus	43	43
Lost in L.A.	38	-
Out of this World	37	37
Police Quest 3	42	37
Rocketeer w/Sound	42	-
Savage Empire	39	-
Sea Rogue	28	-
Strike Commander	?	-
Willy Beamish	42	-

FUTURE

	IBM	AMI
A.G.E.	Sept	Sept
Battletech 2	19	-
Buck Rogers	15	33
Buck Rogers 2	34	-
Breach 2	21	33
Dune	37	37
Epic	42	42
Elite Plus	32	-
Free D.C.	40	-
Gateway	38	-
Hard Nova	34	34
Jonny Crash	Fall	-
Leather Godesses of Phobos 2	46	-
"M"	November	-
Mantis Fighter	38	38
Martian Memorandum	30	-
MechWarrior	25	-
Megatraveller 1	15	-
Megatraveller 2	39	37
Megatraveller 3	Fall	-
Nova 9	25	-
Out of this World	37	37
Planets Edge	38	-
Powerhits Battletech	33	-
Rex Nebular	38	-
Rise of Dragon VGA	39	39
Rules of Engagement	39	39
Space Quest 4	42	37
Star Control 2	37	-
StarFlight 1	17	34
StarFlight 2	19	34
Star Trek 25th Anniversary	36	-
Twilight 2000	32	Fall
Twilight 2001	Jan 93	-
Ultrabots	?	-
Wing Commander 2	47	-
W/C 2 Spec Ops 1	19	-
W/C 2 Spec Ops 2	19	-
Speechpak	15	-

HINT BOOKS

AD & D Clue Books	10-12	-
Chuck Yeager Handbook	16	-
Civilization	17	-
Eye of Beholder 2	12	-
Falcon Air Combat	12	-
Lord of Rings	10	-
Lucasfilm Air Combat	16	-
Harpoon Battle Book	19	-
Magic Candle 2	10	-
Might & Magic III Hint	15	-
Planet's Edge	15	-
Railroad Tycoon	12	-
Run 5 Magazine 1-17	5	-
Seria Hint Books	8	-
Star Trek 25th	10	-
Ultima 7	10	-
Ultima Underworld	12	-
Wing Commander Hintbook	15	-
Wizardry 6 Hint Book	12	-

HARDWARE

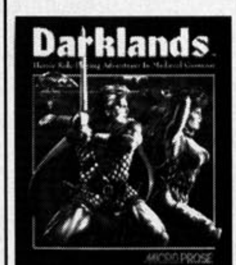
Adlib	49	-
Soundblaster (Pro)	180	-
Soundblaster (Pro Basic)	150	-
Soundblaster (Micro Ch)	269	-
Gravis Eliminator Card	29	-
Gravis (Joystick)	39	34
CH-Flightstick	49	-
Pro Audio Spectrum 16 Bit	239	-
Thunderboard	99	-
Thrustmaster J/S	79	-
Thrustmaster Weapons Cntrl	79	



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STRATEGY

PRE WW II

	IBM	AMI
Bandit Kings China	39	39
Battles of Napoleon	36	-
Civil War Vol. 1, 2 or 3	27	-
Conquered Kingdoms	October	-
Genghis Khan	37	37
Gettysburg	39	-
Gold of Americas (SSG)	26	-
Grand Fleet	39	39
Kingdoms of England	-	37
L'Empereur	36	-
No Greater Glory	43	43
Nobunaga's Amb. 2	39	-
Prelude to Jutland	29	-
Red Baron VGA	42	37
Romance 3 Kingdoms 2	42	42
V for Victory	43	-
Warlords/Enhanced	32	32

WORLD WAR II

Aces of the Pacific	42	-
Action Stations V. 3.2	32	32
Action Sta. Data Disk	17	17
Air Raid Pearl Harbor	29	-
B-17 Flying Fortress	38	-
B. Tank Barbarosa	39	39
Bismarck	29	-
Carriers at War	42	-
Carrier Strike	42	-
Fleet Commander	Winter	-
Fleet Med	39	39
Great Naval Battles	October	-
In Harm's Way	39	39
Malta Storm	39	39
Midway	29	-
MBT Kursk	39	39
Panzer Battles	26	34
Rommel N. Africa	26	-
Second Front	37	37
Secret Weapons Luft.	44	-
P-38 (LUCAS)	20	-
P-80 (LUCAS)	20	-
DO 335	20	-
HE 162	20	-
Silent Service 2	34	34
Task Foerce 1942	XMas	-
Their Finest Hour/Battlehawks	44	19
Third Reich	28	28
Typhoon of Steel	19	39
V for Victory	43	-
Western Front	37	-

SCI-FI

Armada 2525	34	-
Breach 2	21	34
Imperium	28	28
Mantis	41	-
Reach for the Stars	28	28
Robosport (Windows)	38	38
Rules of Engagement	39	39
Second Conflict (Windows)	34	-

SEPTEMBER SPECIALS

Batletech II	19	-
Conflict Korea	16	-
Champions of Krynn	19	-
Curse Azure Bonds	15	-
Death Knights of Krynn	19	-
Knights of Legend	15	-
Mechwarrior	25	-
Ogre	19	-
Omega	15	-
Overrun	-	10
Patton Strikes Back	17	-
Quest for Glory II	22	-
Secret Silver Blades	15	-
War of Lance	12	-

MODERN

	IBM	AMI
A Line in the Sand	27	-
Adv. Tac Air Com.	Summer	-
Conflict Korea	167	37
Conflict Middle East	39	39
F-117A Nighthawk (VGA)	43	-
F-15 III	42	-
F-15 III Mstr Edit	47	-
Falcon 3.0	45	-
Falcon 3.0 Campaign Disk	25	-
Global Effect	34	34
Gunship 2000	38	-
Gunship 2000 Disk 1	22	-
Harpoon v.1.2	27	33
Harpoon #2 Or #3	20	20
Harpoon #4	22	22
Harpoon Designer Series	32	-
Harpoon Scen. Edit.	28	28
Harpoon Challenger Pack	43	52
M-1 Tank Platoon	36	36
MBT Centr. Germany	39	39
MBT Middle East	39	39
MBT North Germany	39	39
Megafortress (360)	28	39
Megafortress Mission Disk #1	24	-
Megafortress Miss #2	24	-
NAM	31	-
7th Fleet	39	39

GENERAL

A-Train	42	-
Civilization	38	38
Civilization Mstr Edit	45	-
Empire Deluxe	November	-
Global Conquest	39	-
Lost Admiral	38	-
Lost Admiral Enhanced	Winter	-
Perfect General	38	38
Perfect General Disk 2	October	-
Perfect General WW II Disk	22	22
Populous 2	-	39
Populous World Editor	-	15
PowerMonger	34	34
PowerMonger WW I Disk	-	22
SimAnt	38	38
Sim City	34	34
Sim Earth	44	44
Sim Life	Fall/Winter	-
Spoils of War	36	-
Theatre of War	33	-

SPORTS

Battle Chess 4000 VGA/SVGA	33/42	-
Grand Prix	37	-
Hardball 3	37	-
Players Disk	15	-
Stadium Disk	15	-
Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf	42	-
Links	39	39
Links Disks 1-7	16 ea.	-
Links 386	42	-
MicroLeague Baseball 4	33	-
NCAA College Football '92	37	-
NFL	42	-
NFL Pro League '92	37	-
The Games/SummerChallenge	October	-
The Games/Winter Challenge	36	-
Tony LaRussa	34	-
LaRussa Disks	15	-
Madden Football	-	34
MLBPA Stats '90	15	-
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World Curcuit	Summer	34

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any moviegoer can think back to the original theatrical length cartoon and imagine *An American Tail* without its memorable standards like "No Cats in America" and "Somewhere, Out There." Yet, the sound card support in the game is restricted to one tune which, although lively, remains basically the same throughout the entire game.

Finally, this is not a game that can be completed quickly. Therefore, the option to save frequently is a must. The authors have allowed for six different games to be saved and retrieved easily through the use of icons. Thus, the player can turn off the machine and resume play where it was saved to disk.

And The Games Aren't Made For Teens (Recommended Ages)

As I personally solved these tales, I had difficulty deciding which age group would be best suited to these adventures. Although the story could be targeted for any age group, the graphics, characters and storyline indicate an elementary school level. However, the difficulty of many of the games played within the adventure would suggest an older child. The necessary reading vocabulary would be most appropriate for a bright high school student or an adult. Even the helpful hints provided by the publisher would not assist someone incapable of reading them.

So, in order to target an age group, I asked several youngsters to assist me. The adventures were tested by one seven-year-old, one ten-year-old, one twelve-year-old, and one-sixteen-year old. The seven-year-old was excited at the prospect of playing a computer game with the Fievel themes. In fact, she was the most enthusiastic of the test group and also the one most familiar with the films. However, she needed constant adult help with the required reading skills and is still in the process of solving the first adventure. She is enjoying playing the games and intends to spend additional time at the computer. She will, of course, need continual adult assistance if she is to succeed.

The ten-year-old became frustrated with the difficulty of some of the inner games, and at one point saved his adventure, but threatened to never return. Coaxed by me, he later retrieved his game and solved it several hours later. However, he required parental encouragement and assistance with the vocabulary and the inner games in order to successfully finish.

The twelve-year-old solved the adventures within a few hours of non-stop play, but he also needed parental assistance with much of the reading. The sixteen-year-old quickly solved the first adventure, but became bored while solving *Fievel Goes West* and ceased trying.

All of the testers agreed that although the graphics were excellent replicas of the ones in the films, they would have been better had they been animated. They also concurred that the single tune played throughout the game was delightful at first, but quickly became monotonous and later, annoying. They also believed that use of speech and different melodies would have greatly enhanced this software.

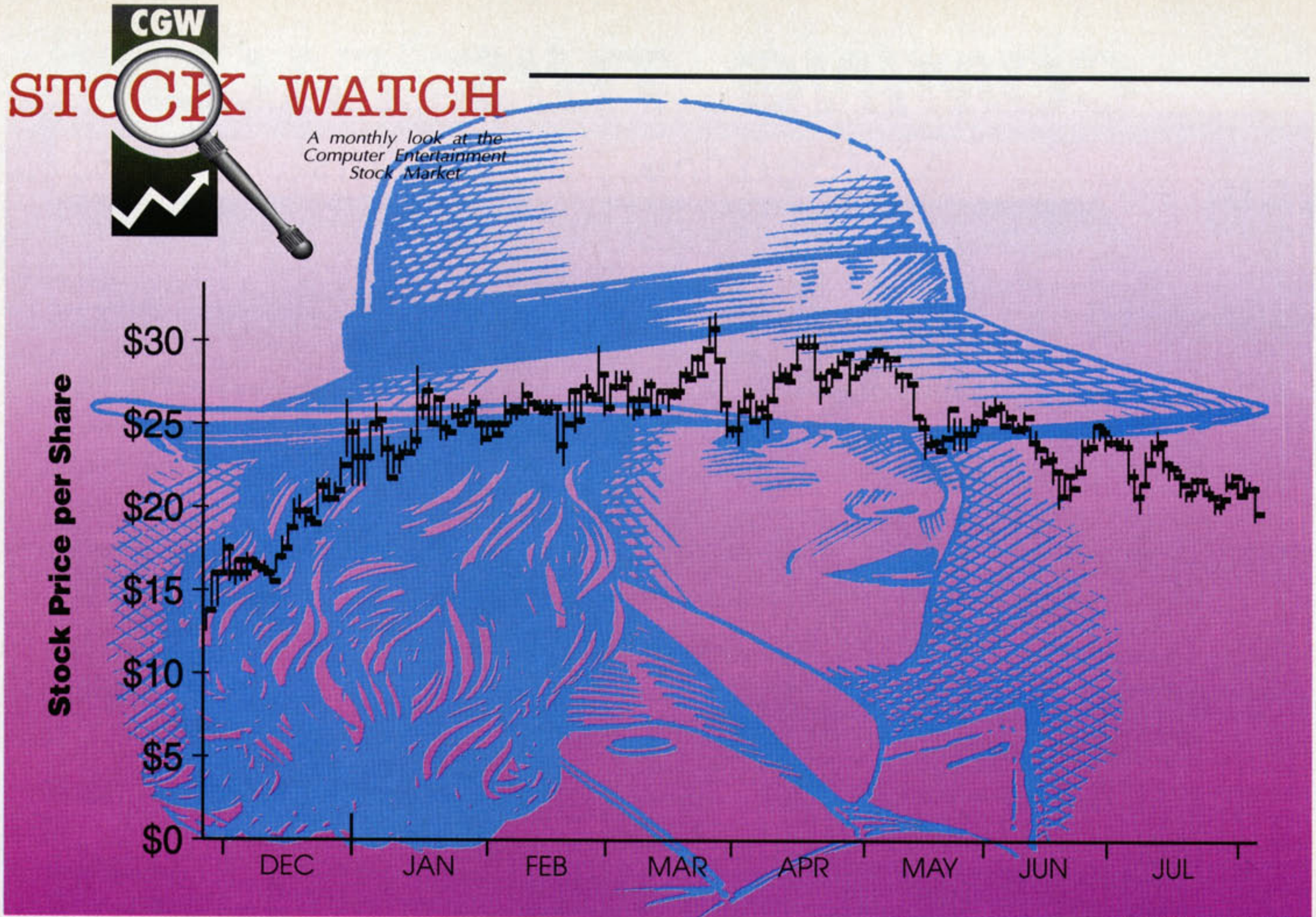
Somewhere, Out There (Conclusion)

Solving these adventures promotes a feeling of accomplishment. However, because it is so difficult to assess any one age group as a target for *An American Tail*, the best use of this adventure game for children might be to share it as a group experience. In this way, children and adults can assist one another and, together, share the joy of accomplishment when the adventure is completed. I recommend this game as a family project for parents and children of elementary school age. CGW

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Prepared by Golden Data Services

Where on Wall Street is Carmen Sandiego?

Broderbund Software (**NASDAQ: BROD**) is best known for its *Print Shop* and *Carmen Sandiego* lines of products. Indeed, Carmen has not only spun off an on-line version of the game (on the Prodigy network), but a Saturday morning television series and non-computer products like the *Carmen Sandiego* jigsaw puzzle. Broderbund's investment in the *Living Books* series is also expected to be a successful product line for the publisher.

At the end of March, 1992, Broderbund announced its second quarter earnings. For the second quarter (which ended on February 29, 1992), Broderbund announced a 42% increase over the same quarter in 1991. That brought the results for the first half of the fiscal year up 34% from the revenues during the same six months of the previous year. Per share earnings were up to $.28 per share over the $.20 in the second quarter of Fiscal 1991 and $.63 per share over the previous years $.52 per share over the same six months.

The stock price for Broderbund spiked upward on good earnings news in March and similarly with the third quarter results announced at the end of June. Revenues for the quarter ending May 31 were up 29% from the same quarter last year, with income up even more dramatically ($.16 per share or 40% up from last year's $.12). Although the earnings report brought the totals for the nine month fiscal period to a 33% increase over the comparable period (and net income to $.79 per share over the $.64 of a year ago for an increase of 29%).

Immediately thereafter, the stock price drifted off with the malaise in the rest of the market. Wall Street has a "What have you done for me, lately?" memory, so even Broderbund's solid fundamentals and the recent acquisition of **PC Globe Software** and affiliation with **New World Computing** (with **Maxis** leaving Broderbund's distribution network, the addition of New World and PC Globe products should take up any slack) have not helped the stock in recent days. CGW

Well Met On The Net

A Designer Looks At *Minotaur*

by William C. Fisher

TITLE:	Minotaur: The Labyrinths of Crete
SYSTEM:	Macintosh Plus or higher, System 6.0.5 or higher, and 1 megabyte of RAM. 8-bit video and 2 megabytes of RAM required for color operation. System 7 compatible. Combat requires a connection to at least one other Macintosh via modem, cable, or AppleTalk.
PLAYERS:	Two to seven players, each on a different Macintosh. One-player exploration mode also available.
PRICE:	$89.99
PROTECTION:	Unique serial number, checked against all other running versions.
DESIGNER:	Jason Jones
PUBLISHER:	Bungie Software Products Corporation, Chicago, IL.

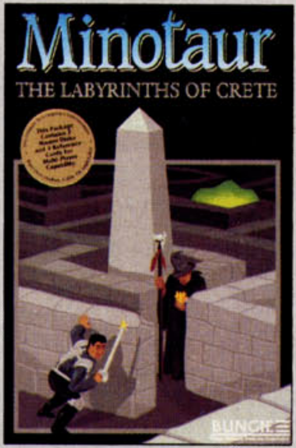
William C. Fisher has been involved in the computer gaming business for more than ten years. He worked as a designer and manager at Mattel Electronics, and then, founded Quicksilver Software, Inc. The company develops software for entertainment, education, and business markets. Their most recent title is Castles, *developed in conjunction with* Interplay Productions. *The company is now working on a number of original product designs, but is not currently designing a network game.*

Minotaur is a medieval fantasy combat simulation designed to run on a group of up to seven connected Macintosh computers. It is a multi-player game designed especially for hardcore gamers who enjoy a modicum of devious scheming and backstabbing with a few close friends. It begins much like any fantasy role-playing game: with character creation. A total of 60 points may be allocated between three categories: Brawn, Agility, and Lore. These represent damage caused by physical attacks, ability to attack or defend, and effectiveness of magic spells. Players are saved to disk between games and retain rather humorous logs of their previous battle results up to, and including, their eventual retirement.

Once a player has been created or loaded, he or she may practice exploring a randomly generated maze filled with powerful items, spells, armor and weapons. This practice mode exists merely to allow the player to practice navigating in the maze, casting spells and testing the benefits of the various items found within the maze. The computer opponent, Bill the Pincushion, never gets hurt and never attacks, although it is possible for the player to die through extreme ineptness.

A player is considered defeated when his Vitality points reach zero (depicted in the center of the screen by a large bar graph). Vitality, of course, can be sapped by physical combat, magical spells, poison or by contact with any of the Stalkers which wander the maze.

There are over eighty different objects in the *Minotaur* labyrinth. Players accustomed to fantasy role-playing games will enjoy the wide variety. In addition to the predictable progression of weapons and armor, there are several magical weapons (Excalibur, Durandal, and some which only appear when four or more people are playing) and magical suits of armor (the Aegis of Zeus and Ethereal Plate Mail). A small sampling of other objects includes: Binding Salve, which attaches the hapless opponent to the floor; the Rust spell, which destroys the opponent's weapon; and Shadowgate, which teleports the opponent to the player's current location. Many of these objects and spells can be counteracted by the use of other objects found in the maze.



Devious use of these items and hand-to-hand combat against one or more human opponents is the heart of *Minotaur*.

Minotaur provides for varied interactions between the players, from simple messaging to commands which support the making of alliances. It's a sort of Groupware for the entertainment set. In the end, of course, there can be no more than one player left standing, so alliances never last.

Game play strategies vary, but the basic technique is the same: gather enough goodies to make a focused attack on one opponent, do your worst, and then, escape to regroup. Naturally, this is not as easy as it sounds. The player must understand the strengths of each object and sort the objects so they may be used quickly and decisively when in battle. The player must also be concerned with defensive equipment and quick means of escape, since the opponent will be at least as well armed and probably will be expecting the attack.

Donald Segretti Memorial Strategies

1. Seal The Forcewall, Luke!

Seal off a dead-end corridor with a Forcewall spell as soon as a Stalker wanders in. Then, cast a Shadowgate spell to teleport an unsuspecting opponent into the trap. Then, use the Feather of Levitation or an Inverse Space spell to escape the danger zone, leaving one's poor opponent to be pummeled by the Stalker until the Forcewall expires.

2. That Old Lack Of Magic

Pick up a good non-magic weapon and armor. Then, create the same type of sealed chamber as described in the "Seal The Forcewall, Luke!" strategy. Shadowgate several opponents into the chamber and follow this up with a Negate Magic spell. Of course, all of their magical weapons and potential spells will no longer work. Of course, it is wise to have an emergency exit plan, just in case one has miscalculated.

3. Department Of Transposition

On those occasions where one finds himself or herself entrapped by a nefarious opponent, the Sceptre of Transposition has tremendous value. It enables one to transpose positions with the enemy. It is, essentially, the artifact most suited for hoisting one's opponents on their own petard. On a different tack, the Stasis Crystal prevents the player from being teleported into a trap, even by a teleporter.

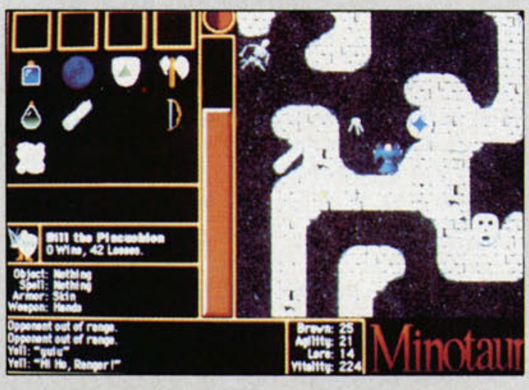
4. Playing The Stalk Market

The Armageddon room, found at the end of each game, is a very intense challenge where the player faces all opposing forces, plus the Stalkers, in a tiny space. Fortunately, there are ways to avoid the Stalkers, however. One can use an Inverse Space or Feather of

Levitation spell and hide inside/above one of the walls. Or, blow out one of the walls so that the Stalkers wander out. This strategy makes it more likely that the game's climax will be a "High Noon" style duel among human players.

Net Results

Minotaur is an engaging and playable game. It works well over a standard AppleTalk network and seems to be quite solid. In hours upon hours of play, nothing whatsoever was found that would qualify as a bug. There are some idiosyncrasies, however.



First, the game makes absolutely no use of the Macintosh mouse. Although expert players may work best when they are able to issue rapid-fire command sequences from the keyboard, new players may find the large number of command keys somewhat intimidating. Also, it is fairly easy to accidentally drop an item in the heat of battle instead of using it or to cast a spell instead of using an item.

Second, the game (as might be expected) moves as slowly as the slowest machine on the network. With a Macintosh II connected to a Macintosh LC via lightly loaded AppleTalk, the keyboard did not always respond immediately. The result was that both players tended to bump into walls and miss making turns in the maze, despite efforts to the contrary. This was a slight frustration. The moral is to use the fastest machines available.

Third, there is no real single-player game. The "One Player Exploration" option exists merely to allow the player to practice navigation, spellcasting and item examination. I realize, of course, that creating a computer player who plays as well as a human opponent would be nearly impossible in a game such as this. Still, it would have been nice if Bill was, at least, capable of doing some basic tricks and putting up a fight when attacked. The game is intended for multi-player use only, but this player sometimes wished, late at night, to have even a crude computer opponent against whom to test and hone his meager skills.

Finally, players are arbitrarily retired after they participate in 50 matches, regardless of skill level. This keeps any one player from becoming far more powerful than others in the game. This limitation, like socialism, may have a noble purpose in redistributing wealth (whether it be artifacts and skills within the game or real-life property in the political system), but it goes against the grain of human nature and is likely to disappoint many true FRP gamers accustomed to the ever-expanding abilities of their favorite characters.

Minotaur addresses a more hard-core gaming audience than other network games like *Spectre*. There is definitely a learning curve to the game. With a group of dedicated opponents, this can make for deep and long-lasting challenges which evolve and become more sophisticated (and devious) over time. This game has no obvious "system" for victory. Fans of mindless violence may prefer a less complex game. Those who enjoy fast-thinking and ad-lib strategizing will find long-lasting enjoyment from this game. CGW

Sneak Preview

Where in the Gallup Poll is the Karma Chameleon?

Cineplay Tosses *Power Politics* Into The Ring

by Johnny L. Wilson

The following article is a Sneak Preview. It is an advance look at a work in progress and, as such, may not reflect the full perspective on the finished product. CGW presents this article for purposes of topicality and interest as the presidential election approaches.

In 1948, the cover of *Life* magazine showed a picture of Thomas E. Dewey crossing the San Francisco Bay on a ferry boat. The banner headline was "The Next President" with no question mark and no weasel words to indicate that Dewey could possibly lose. *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time* and *Newsweek* all predicted a Republican sweep. Alistair Cooke, the commentator who was later to introduce so many "masterpiece" productions to the PBS audience, entitled his *Manchester Guardian* column for November 1, "Harry S. Truman, A Study in Failure." *The Chicago Tribune* printed its morning edition well in advance with a banner headline that read, "DEWEY BEATS TRUMAN."

The pundits were wrong. Truman managed to beat Dewey with a ferocious, fighting campaign that was often called the "Whistle Stop Campaign" (so-called for the Republican charge that Truman's presidential train stopped at every little whistle stop on the president's trek westward to accept an honorary degree at the University of California at Berkeley). Truman's "human touch," reported one paper, was what had turned the tide. **Cineplay**'s *Power Politics* allows gamers to run the same kind of hard-hitting presidential campaign that Truman ran to a degree no presidential election game has ever done before. Up to three players can "hot seat" (take turns at the same computer keyboard and monitor) campaigns of four, eight or twelve weeks in simulated duration for "almost" any election (authentic or imaginary) from 1960 to the present.



Windows on the Political Process

Power Politics runs under *Microsoft Windows* and is, potentially, to presidential election games what the serious two-player (no AI) simulation from *Campaigns & Elections* magazine, *On The Campaign Trail*, was to senatorial campaigns. The latter allowed player candidates to create targeted mailings using specific demographics and issues; produce issue-oriented commercials and make media buys using ratings/time slot information; bring in celebrities related to the party's platform; hold fund raisers; and make personal appearances. It did not allow player candidates to create their own profiles (one had to campaign with the fictitious candidates provided) and did not offer an interesting debate mechanism.

Power Politics allows player candidates (whether based on real candidates or custom-designed candidates) to make national, state or city-by-city media buys on specific issues; hold fund raisers; make issue-oriented campaign appearances; schedule the vice-presidential candidate's speeches and fund raisers (an elegant and useful touch); research national, state and city opinion polls; order dirty tricks and participate in debates centered around four campaign issues.

The flow of play is relatively fast and elegant, centering around a simple "point and click" interface. When the game begins, players either create their own candidate or load one of the standard candidate files for Democrats (from JFK and RFK up through the current crop), Republicans (from Nixon, without running mate Lodge or later candidate Goldwater, to Baker, Buchanaan, Bush, Duke and, inexplicably, George Wallace) and Independents (Perot, Wallace, Jackson, Schwarzkopf, Commoner, Powell et.al.). Then, one presses typical on-screen Windows buttons to select the options for: campaign funding (limited, normal or exorbitant), debate frequency (one, two, three or an unlimited number per week), random events (none, few or normal), campaign length (four, eight or 12 weeks), incumbency advantage (none, some, significant) and random news (sparse, normal or prolific).

Once the options are decided upon, each candidate plots his/her vice-presidential candidate's schedule for the first full week (pointing and clicking on one state for each day and whether the candidate will be fund raising or campaigning) and then, his/her own schedule for each day. One clicks on the state where one wishes to campaign and chooses each campaign action within that state from a menu. Each action drains a certain amount of energy and, as in **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**'s election classics (*President Elect* and *President Elect '88*), fatigue can cause candidates to alienate special interests and voters.

Speaking on the Issues

Each campaign action will center on a particular issue (abortion, gun control, taxes, education, environment, nuclear power, health care, death penalty, crime, unemployment, defense cuts, and civil rights) and the demographics for each city/state will affect how the candidate's position on that issue



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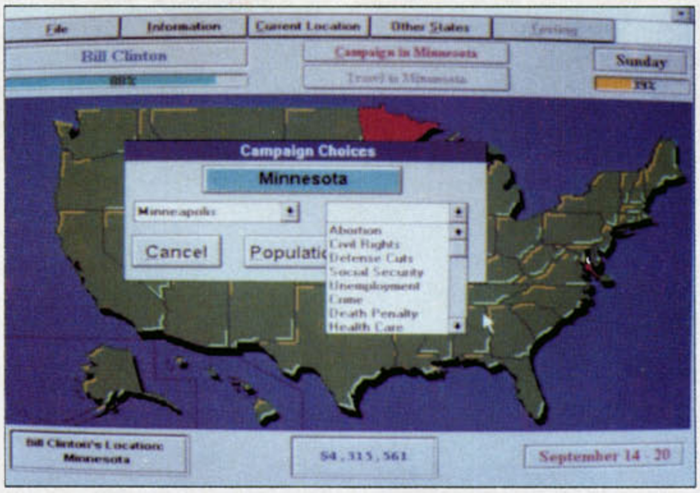
will affect the voters. Since the issues are so important, the wise candidate will check to see how his/her positions match up with the positions on that issue held by the majority of voters in a given state.

When I campaign in a state, I immediately find exact matches between my candidate file and the state's demographics. Then, I check my overall standing in the state. If I have a significant lead, I may only make one or two appearances in a state. If it is close, I will make several appearances, as well as a media buy. In states where I have no perfect match, I will make a statewide media buy in which I have "Image Building" commercials blitz the state. Such commercials do not run any risk and they can help more than appearances where one differs from the bulk of the populous.

In states where I have some matches, I will conduct a city poll and make appearances in those cities where I am faring poorly, pounding away on those issues where I am in complete agreement with the general populace.

This capacity to play "Karma Chameleon" on the campaign trail is, at the same time, one of the game's greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses. It is its greatest strength because it is much more entertaining to gear one's campaign to the issues and exploit the differences between one's opponent(s) and oneself. I enjoy it much more than *President Elect* where one simply schedules appearances with no agenda whatsoever and *On The Campaign Trail* where an issue-oriented appearance works against, as well as for, the candidate.

Unfortunately, the latter is the most realistic approach. In the real world, Benjamin Page's "Theory of Ambiguity" is the dominant theory in campaigning. This theory states that most issue-oriented candidate appeals entail costly trade-offs in support for that candidate. That is, every definitive position alienates some voters. In *On The Campaign Trail*, players are almost inevitably penalized for any issue-oriented stances, particularly when the opponent is smart enough to deal with amorphous leadership and unity issues.



Now, whereas a student of history might be reminded, upon playing *On The Campaign Trail*, of Truman's Dallas speech in 1948 when he assailed Dewey's ambiguous appeals to unity ("Republican candidates are apparently trying to sing the American voters to sleep with a lullaby about unity. ... They don't want unity. They want surrender."), *Power Politics* does not make (at least, in the alpha version we played) any allowances for information contamination. One can play "Karma Chameleon" and only take a stand on abortion in states that agree with one's position, but in the real world that information goes all over the country. *Power Politics* does not currently take this information flow into consideration. Still, it makes for a much more interesting game than the Benjamin Page strategy.

Dirty Tricks

Another factor that makes *Power Politics* more entertaining than its predecessors is the possibility of using dirty tricks. In the 1960s, Young Republicans like Donald Segretti and company practiced a ruthless form of campaign espionage known euphemistically as rodent copulating (that's the closest we will come to printing their term). They would do everything from printing phony campaign literature for the other side to creating traffic jams or staged demonstrations to disrupt an opponent's schedule. *Power Politics* allows players to select strategies like: political espionage, media bribes, illegal contributions, spying on opponent, investigation of opponent's past, leaking false stories or lying about one's personal history. More typically, one can also indulge in a current fad from both parties, the use of negative advertising. Fortunately, *Power Politics* has built-in mechanisms where these tricks can backfire on the candidate who uses them, but when one is desperate, they are there to use.

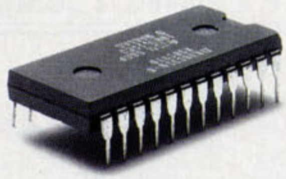
The Great Debate

Unfortunately, the debate mechanism is largely simplified from the elegant, but thought-provoking structure of *President Elect*. In the older game, player candidates had to choose the percentage of their proposition/rebuttal they would spend with particular tactics in order to respond to a given issue. Player candidates might bore their simulated audience to tears with facts ("Discuss Relevant Considerations"); cut right to the chase with their own positions ("State Own Position"); go for the opponent's jugular ("Attack Opponent's Position"); paint one's opponent as somewhat ludicrous ("Criticize with Witticisms"); or attempt an end run around the issue ("Kill Time"). By using this system, the older game allowed clever players the opportunity to handle difficult questions, the ones that could potentially hurt their candidacy, with such aplomb that their answers could actually gain votes rather than lose them.

In *Power Politics*, no nimble debating strategy is required. The issues which are selected will impact voters in all 50 states and the player candidate has no input on answering the questions. He/She wins or loses on the candidate's profile on the issues and not on a given performance. Yet, such close elections as the 1960 Nixon-Kennedy contest often hinged more on the electorate's perception of the candidate's performance rather than on the answers that they gave or the substance of their arguments. As one who is a fan of debating in any form, I miss the more interactive debate feature.

Election Night

The final returns on *Power Politics* will not, of course, be in until the game is published. Our preliminary projection is that the game will be well-received among strategy gamers who enjoy presidential politics. It offers entertainment value that has often been missing from simulations in the past (opportunity to select and manipulate issues) with some new and useful features (the ability to turn off the deadly incumbency advantage factored into the *President Elect* games, presentation of useful poll data with national, state and city breakdowns and capacity for dirty tricks). It may not offer the most accurate demographics of political simulations and may not accurately reflect one of the most important principles of democratic politics, but it may well be the most enjoyable game of presidential politics yet. CGW



THIS OPPONENT IS PROGRAMMED TO BE CHALLENGING.

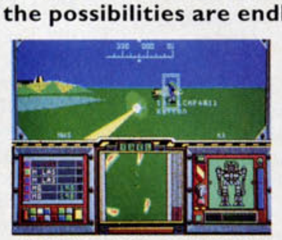


this one wants to rip your lungs out.

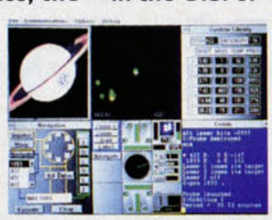
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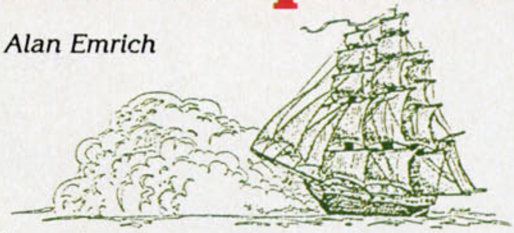
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II Samuel 22:35

Broadsides & Gripeshot

by Alan Emrich

A Grognard by Any Other Name



This year, the *CGW* editorial staff will be making it's appearance at the national gaming convention, *Origins* (which is being held in conjunction with the *Gen-Con Game Fair* in Milwaukee, WI). While several new board wargames will be revealed at this gathering of about 10,000 gamers, one computer game that has been the focus of much discussion here is also on schedule for release at this time.

Computer EastFront is an IBM Windows translation of the **Columbia Games** boardgame of the same name (they will also be releasing the companion boardgame, *WestFront* which, hopefully, will inspire a companion computer game). This is the game which brought up the "games sans brains" discussions here and on **Prodigy Interactive Network** some time ago. The game has no artificial intelligence (if you play it solitaire, you must play both sides and "change hats"), but instead offers extensive play-by-modem and E-mail features. It's a wargame designed primarily for human connectivity and we hope it blazes a solid niche among our community of readers.

Hands On Vs. Hands Off

Recently, there has been much debate stirred by the Gary Grigsby game *Carrier Strike* released by SSI. It was *not* a debate about strategy, pricing or customer support, however. Instead, this debate was about the inclusion (and exclusion) of a certain element of game play. To wit: in *Carrier Strike* the player assumes the role of Nimitz or Yamamoto. Thus, players can order their fleets out and launch air strikes from their carriers, but land-based air operations are beyond the player's control. Instead, they are handled by the game's AI. Similarly, search aircraft from individual ships cannot be moved willy-nilly, hex-by-hex under direct human guidance, but instead fly in correct search "patterns," again conducted by the game's AI.

This has upset many wargamers. Some of us actually *like* to control every aircraft and soldier in the Pacific Theater during WWII. After all, many of us have been board gamers for years, where such direct player control is mandated. However, among the many innovations which computers have brought to traditional board wargamers is the advent of limiting one's command abilities. The many games from **SSG** (particularly among the plethora of *Battlefront* clones) all emphasized this loss of direct player control. As I discussed this entire matter with others, I believe it was Jim Dunnigan who, in a comment on **GEnie**, labeled such players "control freaks," a name which I've stuck with for its self deprecating humor and biting ring.

On the other end of the spectrum are the wargamers who *like* to have the game's AI relieve them of some of the hex-by-hex burdens. Those among us with less time to spend gaming, or who simply don't want to *work* as hard playing wargames as they have in the past, are attracted to this "delegation of duties to the computer" aspect of wargaming command. After all, when you leave school to face those "real world" responsibilities like a career and family, time for gaming becomes a precious commodity, so any time saver that can be found is welcome. Generally, then, older gamers tended to like these novel AI features. Again, with considerable self deprecation, I've dubbed this group of gamers the "gray hairs."

Now, not everyone fits neatly into either one category or the other. Personally, I'm very much both. I happen to respect and enjoy both aspects of unit management, but have to be much more selective about the amount of time I spend as a control freak. The boardgame *Advanced Third Reich* and computer game *Second Front* are my dedicated, intensely controlled "regulars." It's a lot easier to boot up *Carrier Strike* or an SSG Civil War game and knock it around for the evening.

What I want to do in presenting this discussion is to get wargame designers to think about what level of control they will *force* players to give or take from a game's engine. In the best of all possible worlds, a wargamer could ask the AI to perform any specific task (or phase) and then allow the human player to peruse the computer's orders and make any specific changes or tweaks desired.

A pipe dream? No. Seeing is believing and I've *seen* this very feature included in *High Command*, the new strategic wargame from **Colorado Computer Creations**. There, players can delegate out any part of a game turn on a phase-by-phase basis. Once, say, the production has been handled by the computer, one can go in and change the building of submarines to cruisers or armor as each production site is inspected. Hopefully, in future games, players will have the option to control as much or as little of the minutiae as desired (with the default being an "historical" setting).

Politically Incorrect

Finally, I've been called on the carpet (by my fellow gamers on some of the networks) for my use of the *insensitive* terms "control freak" and "gray hair." If this should offend, I can only recommend not taking things so seriously. Gamers are considered "different" by the rest of society and are often perceived as being "pointy headed." Bask in it. Revel in your weirdness. I'm a wargamer, both a control freak *and* a gray hair, and I'm proud of it. You should be, too. CGW

Not Just Another Brick in the Wall

Castles 2

is for Building Empires

The real story
by Alan Emrich

The following article is a sneak preview of a work in progress. It is not intended to provide a "Buy" or "Don't Buy" recommendation for our readers, but solely to inform our readership of what we consider to be a very interesting, upcoming product.

Nature, like most slovenly gamers I know, abhors a vacuum. In the case of the death of a powerful monarch, it leaves a void that simply must be filled. Like the death of Alexander the Great, when King Charles of Bretagne died heirless, the powerful warlords he had led needed to choose a leader from amongst their ranks. Quickly, the issue became heated and, amidst the chaos of the ensuing power struggle, only one warlord could emerge triumphant. For players of **Interplay**'s forthcoming *Castles 2*, this will require more than mere castle building.

Laying a New *Castles* Foundation

Where *Castles* was, in effect, "*Sim Mason,*" *Castles 2* is more of a Perry Mason. Designed from the beginning as a heads-up strategy (dare I say "war?") game, players must use all of the cunning and wisdom of that famous TV lawyer if they are to navigate the treacherous seas of intrigue and diplomacy. The head that wears the crown in *Castles 2* is truly heavy. The plots and intrigues are vast and can be influenced by a mind numbing myriad of player options.

What was once a solitaire only game that quickly became just another brick in the wall, *Castles 2* is a five-sided contest worthy of any power politics strategy game. Played on a fixed map, a pre-game screen allows users to adjust the initial placements of commodities (the gold, timber, food and iron which are the key element of the game's economic engine). Starting territories are also randomized a bit for each player, include the odd province here and there belonging to the Pope. From this opening screen players can toggle on and off many of the "extraneous" features (films, music, plot and the tactical battle resolution system) so that they can just concentrate on straightforward empire building. Still, the richness that is promised in this opening screen is vast, indeed.

Played in "real time" (i.e., the clock is always ticking), difficult decisions must be made under a realistic sense of urgency, as one's enemies plot and time their moves against the peace of the player's own demesne. Truly, the "real time" aspect of a multi-player strategy game almost *begs* for modem play. (It is my understanding that if and when a first supplement disk is produced, the modem play feature is first on the list for inclusion — welcome news for strategy gamers). To speed through the few lulls in the action, players can simply "lean" on the right mouse button and the game will proceed at warp speed until interrupted by the next event occurring.



Castles 2 is played on an area map of that part of Bretagne where the civil war is taking place. There are five warlords and the Pope, all vying to create a hegemony over the land. Naturally, each area offers its owner a certain commodity and the economic system of the game is based on stockpiling these resources which include: food, stone/timber, and the extremely important metals of iron and gold. Securing access and constantly mining/refining/harvesting these resources is the key to wealth and, as in many fine strategy games, wealth is the key to power. Of course, securing good relationships with other players (particularly the Pope), is only slightly less important. Let them deteriorate and you'll have saboteurs flooding your lands. Let them deteriorate enough with the Pope and watch out for the dreaded "black cross of excommunication (i.e., this is the Pope's way of declaring "open season" on a player).

Halls of Administration

Players will spend most of their time playing *Castles 2* in trying to efficiently divide their abilities (and attention) between several tasks. At the beginning of the game, one has low ratings in the three attributes of administration, military and political. To perform a task, such as recruiting soldiers, requires a certain commitment of one's military attributes over a period of time. Optionally, players can throw some political or administrative talent behind the task to help expedite it, but often this will leave them without enough points to conduct a critical task in *those* areas. This will commit that player to the option and reveal a "time bar" which counts down the days until completion. Every decision is a trade off in *Castles 2*, and concentrating one's resources "here" (say, recruiting soldiers) means that they won't be available "there" (say, for sabotaging a neighbor). At least, not until the player has raised their ratings points by successfully conducting endeavors over a period of time.

One activity that a player can perform is to call a council meeting

of his knights. This will tell a player his ranking in strata of warlord prestige and indicate which players have been either blessed or excommunicated from His Holiness. It also presents a report on any unrest in friendly provinces and a quick breakdown of where a player's score is coming from.

Players will generally have a score (assuming the scoring system survives intact through further playtesting) between 2,000 and 5,000 points. Points are, naturally, awarded for one's ability, stocks of good, territories owned, favorable relations with other players and "wise decisions" made in reaction to the various story lines (which, I understand, can change from game-to-game — i.e., there's likely to be some kind of dynamic intelligence built into the storylines that adapts them to on-board circumstances in such a way as to make today's "wise decision" into tomorrows blunder). When a player's score is high enough, the Pope nominates that player for king and, unless knocked down a few pegs pretty quickly by the other players, the game will end with that player winning.

"Don't Bother Me Now!"

At the game's beginning, a player can be performing no more than three tasks and no more than one which concentrates on each prime attribute. Each task, if successful, increases the chance that a player's attributes will rise and unsuccessful use of attributes can lower them quickly (particularly one's military attribute, which is subject to rise and fall with the army). Thus, persistance is the key to empire building.

A whole political subgame goes with the smoothly integrated economic and military aspects of *Castles 2*. Scouting, spying, parleys and sabotage become standard tools of "diplomatic warfare." The diplomatic front is an ever fluctuating area, however. Many plot lines in the game's stories (the same types that added so much flavor to the original *Castles*) feature diplomatic byplay. Still and always, though, one must keep appeasing the Pope (who looks ascance at attacking any other player in his good standing). Many "off board" characters are included in the storylines (such as the widowed Queen, mercenaries, et al) who can aid or hinder a player.



Where's The Castles?

The castles are built in a simplified manner and are used to fortify a province to make it less vulnerable to enemy attack. Naturally, it requires a huge expenditure in time, resources and abilities. Players can still custom design their walls, towers, doors and keeps, but need not worry about the brick-by-brick details. Selecting the ground, design and building plan (keep first, outward, inward or even) is all that is needed. No more attention is necessary. Custom designs can be saved and reused in different territories. Players better make sure that they are happy with their original choices, however, as the game makes no provision for returning to a territory and expanding the castle.

Who Goes There?

The two different troop types have been slightly expanded. Not only can a player recruit infantry and archers, but also knights (very expensive). Knights are great in an open battle, but less effective in seiges. That's what the even *more* expensive array of seige equipment is for.

In addition to fielding an army, one must maintain it. Every spring, the play must have ample reserves of gold to pay them and every fall they must be supplied food for the winter. Postponement (or worse, failure) to meet these obligations results in desertion that can quickly lead to ruin.

I ♥ The Black Market

Trade is another key element of play. One does not always start out with access to a balanced economy. Gold is needed for virtually everything, but when it comes time to feed the troops in the fall, they can't eat gold. The same is true when the army marches. Since, as we all know, they march on their stomachs, if there's no food, they'll stay put. Iron is required to recruit infantry, timber for archers and castle building, and many endeavors require appropriate commodities. If one doesn't have them, they must either be conquered (not always feasable) or traded for. While sending a merchant to a neighboring province may or may not net the player a good deal (over time), visiting the local "Abdul's Select Shoppe" just outside the castle wall will present a quick exchange opportunity at the black market. While quick, the prices are high and more than once has this trader met with traitors who took his goods and gave *nothing* in return. (If I wanted that, I'd pay more taxes [grin]).

Siege Burgher

The combat system features three types of units: infantry, archers and cavalry. Many battles will be fought in the open, tactically. This will use a system which is enhanced from the original Castles, but does not offer any visual enhancement from the isolated figures of the first product, although it is fair to speculate that a more detailed "module" might be forthcoming as an add-on product, should *Castles 2* be a hit. Sieges are conducted with the building of various siege equipment (catapults, ballistia, siege towers and so forth). In the alpha version examined, however, the integration of these tactical combat features was not yet in. However, players who enjoyed the original *Castles* will find the systems similar, with improvements and additions in the new *Castles 2* version of tactical combat.

Mini-Movies

Castles 2 has some terrific plot lines already (many more will be added by its release this fall) and includes ambient video ("mini-movies") to accentuate play. These black and white bits of animation are amusingly appropriate and, a brief (and welcome) respite from the real-time tension of the game. Players will be particularly amused at seeing the king's reaction to "bad news" and inspired to see the troops preparing for battle.

Castles 2 has evolved into a fine game of strategy and management set in a medieval motif. Rich in detail yet easy to understand and control, **Interplay** seems to be finding a nice balance while "building" *Castles 2*. This game won't be for the *SimCity* crowd that the original *Castles* might have particularly appealed to, but strategy gamers are going to want to take a look at this one. CGW

Sink Or Swim

Torpedo Bombing with the Grumman TBF Avenger in

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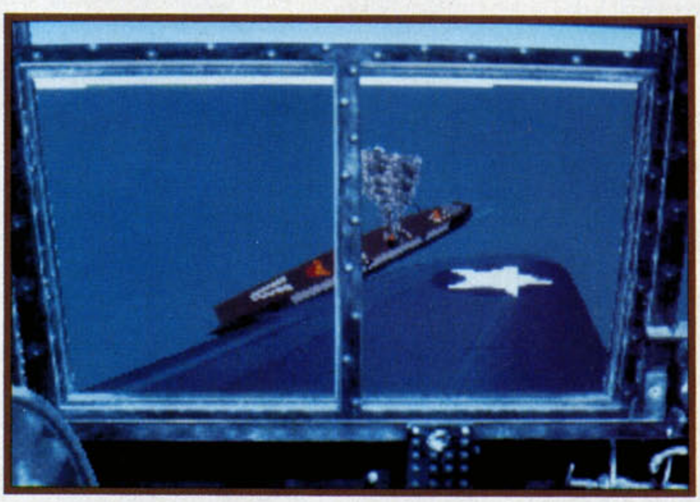


by Mark Crowe

By now, anyone who has decided to brave the challenge of torpedo bombing in *Aces of the Pacific* knows that it is *not* as easy as swooping in, dropping a torpedo and watching the ship roll over. Torpedo bombers are slower, less maneuverable craft than most computer pilots are used to and torpedoes (especially the Mark 13) are weapons that are much less reliable than most gamers prefer.

Running Down The Checklist

First off, a look at the equipment is in order. The aircraft, a Grumman TBF Avenger, is called "Turkey" with good reason: It's slow and easy to shoot at. The game's documentation states that the Avenger could take a large amount of damage and still fly, but anyone who experiences a couple of involuntary splashdowns is likely to think they're talking about another airplane. The flight manual, after all, implies that the top speed is about 270 mph. Well, that's what it might do in the states, but out over the Pacific, one is only likely to see that speed going downhill with a tailwind. In general, pilots can plan on reaching 225-230 mph in level flight with a fish strapped to the plane's belly and two crewmen in the back (a radioman and a gunner), trying to protect the plane's "six" with two .30-cal.'s for firepower.



Learning To Drop A Torp

Training is a priority for those who want to put a live warshot into the side of a Japanese boat. Players select "Torpedo Bombing" from the "Training Mission" menu and immediately find themselves on a weapon run towards a derelict vessel. With flaps halfway down and airspeed throttled down 50%, it should be possible to descend to cherubs one (one hundred feet) and level out, aiming slightly forward of amidships. As the airspeed drops toward 100 mph, the Avenger should gradually lose altitude as it approaches the target. The best chance of putting a live fish into the target is to release at an altitude of 20-40 feet with a speed of less then 100 mph. The flight manual recommends a drop about 1,000 yards from the target. Since there aren't any yard markers out there, however, experienced pilots will soon discover that dropping the fish about 3 ship's lengths away from the target works out to be 1,000 yards, give or take. Then, immediately after release, one should go to full

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yards, give or take. Then, immediately after release, one should go to full throttle and begin a slight right-hand climb away from the vessel. After 30-60 seconds, one either gets a report of successful results or discovers that he has dropped a log. Either way, it's time to hit the **ESC** button to end the mission. Then, one can simply keep using the Replay Mission option in order to go up against the derelict until one masters the technique.

Going To Battle

Once the training is over, it's time to face someone who can shoot back. Select "Anti-Shipping Strike" in the "Fly Single Mission" menu. Then, it's time to set preferences, check the flight map and verify that there is, indeed, a Mark 13 fish on board. Sometimes, the ordnance men load the wrong payload by mistake and a cautious pilot is more likely to remain a live pilot.

CAUTION: Tokyo Rose was able to get some misinformation into the briefing packet about the skills of the Japanese pilots. Anytime one's intelligence briefing claims that there are only Novice Pilots flying in the area, one should automatically prepare to face the enemy aces which will, more than likely, be (f)lying in ambush. Regular Pilots is, however, an indicator that there are more reasonable opponents in the vicinity.



After clicking on "Begin Mission," pilots will find themselves on the deck of a flattop (or possibly in the dust of Henderson Field) and ready to take-off. Once airborne, of course, it is tempting to use autopilot to speed up the trip to the target, but the trade-off is the loss of the ability to conceal oneself and the likelihood of getting bounced by fighters on patrol.

Staying Alive On The Way To The Target

If a pilot is bounced by enemy fighters, it is possible to run, but even more probable that once the Japanese fighters have seen one of the good guys, that they'll stick on his tail like glue. Naturally, the gamer's chances of beating the aggressors is slim (Where is a fighter escort when it's needed?) and the Avenger may end up imitating a porpoise before the player knows it. About all one can reasonably do is initiate evasion tactics to their utmost (especially the skid), listen to the gunner and try to stay alive long enough for the gunners to knock out the fighters.

Sinking Some Ships

Once the target area is acquired, one can choose which target or targets are of primary consequence. Pilots get to make the decision between concentrating on a single target or sending their flight against multiple targets. If there is a high value unit in the group such as a battleship or cruiser, there is a better chance to watch her roll over if everyone is sent against her alone.

Note that while special tactics, like the anvil, look great on paper, they are extremely difficult to set up with a limited radio vocabulary. Also, any pilots who use the autopilot option to get to the target area will find that it tends to dump one right on top of the target area at about angels five, not a good position for a weapon run. So, it will be immediately necessary for those who arrived via autopilot to descend. Diving away from the targets to cherubs five and slowing to about 60% power before turning back toward the target should accomplish quite a bit, particularly as the player continues to descend to cherubs one. AA fire tends to get thick around angels three and thins out as one drops below cherubs four, but the enemy gunners must need better glasses because they don't often score any good hits. Now, it's time for that final run, deja vu from that practice with the derelict. Once the drop is made and the plane heads outbound, pilots will want to stay low in order to avoid AA. There simply isn't much below cherubs two.

Cleaning Up And Heading Home

After the drop, the only thing left to do is damage assessment. Many pilots may find it cathartic to pump some lead into the Japanese boats, but it does little or no damage and wastes ammo that might be needed later, especially if one is bounced on the homeward trip. Once one's flight has dropped all torps, using the autopilot option should get one back to one's carrier (or field). Then it's off to the debriefing to find out how successful, or unsuccessful, the mission actually was.

Bugs on the Windscreen

There are several things that may make missions unpleasant when flying the Avenger. Among them is the fake novice pilot gambit brought up earlier. Also, finding out one has been loaded for strike when one is supposed to have a torpedo is something else that can cause serious gnashing of teeth and joystick destruction. Loss of aircraft control can also be a problem. If the latter occurs, (usually while evading an inbound fighter), one should hit F10 and recalibrate the system. Otherwise, one is stuck with a craft that will not respond to any input and one's on-screen alter ego soon becomes cannon fodder. Being prepared for these problems may make them less bothersome when they crop up.



Well, now it is time to head out and send some enemy sailors swimming. Good luck and good shooting. CGW

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Merger Most Foul –

Corporate Warfare in the 23rd Century A Replay of RAW Entertainment's **Fireteam 2200**

by Michael Peck

When alien task force meets corporate mercenaries, the action can be fast and furious. This article serves to describe futuristic armored combat between mercenary groups within the setting of **RAW Entertainment**'s *Fireteam: 2200*, a tactical simulation of an era when corporations resolve market disputes with tanks instead of lawsuits. In this episode, a Centauri Faction task force (controlled by the computer) has been sent to capture a mining village, while our smaller (human-controlled) Lumani Corporate team (aka Peckforce) has been assigned the heroic task of delaying the advance.

Mix-and-Match Mercenaries

When the call came into the Peckforce HQ, we knew we had to move fast before the Centauris overran the objective. The first task would be to put together the right kind of task force to fit the mission. Even with 23rd Century technology, choosing units for an armor group involves tradeoffs between speed, armor and firepower.

Since Peckforce had to reach the village quickly, speed was a prime consideration. Helicopters and hovercraft are fast and heavily armed, but their thin armor dooms them to a one-way flight. Conversely, the heavier tanks are too slow. We finally opted for five vehicles: two recon tanks, which combine speed with good armor; a third, more heavily armed, medium hovertank for quick fire support; a light tank for its speed and economy; and finally, to add real muscle, a slow but devastating heavy tank to serve as the Peckforce command vehicle. Ideally, the lighter vehicles would screen the enemy Centauris from the village while the heavy tank waddled up.

Not Exactly Think-Tanks

There are two crucial facts one must understand about *Fireteam: 2200*. *First,* players only give general orders to their units, and second, 23rd Century soldiers are incredibly stupid. Other than the Command Tank, which is personally controlled by the player, vehicles are given up to three objectives.



The problem is that they will head straight for those objectives without bothering to take the best route. Thus, a tank told to head toward a village will go in a straight line through woods and towns, although a nearby road offers a much faster route. Plotting vehicles to negotiate a road with several turns is an ordeal. This is a common problem in tactical games like *Kampgruppe,* but surprising in a game where the computer-navigated tanks are 300 years more advanced. Given this limitation, we elected to make the heavy tank the Peckforce command vehicle. Under human control, it could take the road all the way to the objective. Otherwise, it would never reach the battle in time.

Over Hill and Over Dale

At precisely 7:00, Peckforce clanked and hovered toward its objectives: the bridge south of the town, the town center (where the Centauri objectives were located) and finally our objectives north of the town, respectively. The lighter vehicles moved in a straight diagonal path toward the bridge, while our heavy tank took a road that ran due east and then straight north into the town. Although the dog-leg path was longer, it was quicker, because all vehicles move faster on roads. Ironically, the behemoth reached the bridge at about the same time as the other tanks, who, naturally, took the nature walk through the scattered woods in their paths.

Where's A Traffic Cop When You Need One?

At the bridge came the first lesson in traffic management, when Sparky (recon tank) blocked the path of Waco Kid (light tank). In *Fireteam*, when one tank's path is blocked by another, the blocked vehicle does not wait a turn or two for the obstruction to clear. Instead, the tanks moved around the obstacle, which in this case meant they became tangled in the woods along the road. Shouting imprecations about our troops' ancestry, we plowed our heavy tank over the bridge.

Our haste grew when the airwaves crackled with frantic voices and the boom of a 120-millimeter cannon as the commander of the Terminator (the hovertank) reported engaging the enemy inside the town. Although a datalink to Terminator would have shown the positions of the Centauri units, we were too busy driving our tank to spend three or four turns watching a datalink display. Instead we drove straight up the road, while the smaller vehicles fanned out towards their objectives. The village may have been pretty, but the drive was nerve-wracking as the burg's modest sky-line blocked line-of-sight.

A left turn around a corner, and bang! — we find two Centauri recon tanks

surrounding a nearly crippled Terminator. It would have been nicer to engage them at long range with our big Gauss Cannon, but we're a mobile fortress and we decided to risk it. Unfortunately, this meant that the Command Tank was to become everyone's target, when, after another exchange, the Terminator dissolved in a puff of greasy smoke. Still, we had an awesome Gauss Cannon and a 105-millimeter secondary gun. Surprise! Only one weapon can be brought to bear at a time. So the Gauss Gun fired every other turn, while the two Davids were firing two shots to our one, and maneuvering to take us in the flank.

Meanwhile, our recon tanks had reached their objectives, but taking the time to order them to help us would have kept us from being able to fire in our own defense. Fortunately, a heavy tank can take a lot of punishment, and our Gauss Cannon managed to deal with both of our opponents before we suffered any critical hits. In the meantime, Sparky took out a third recon tank.

Scarred but whole, the command tank moved north, as Sparky came under fire and suddenly went off the air. As we rumbled toward the scene of the firefight, there was another surprise in a nearby woods. It was a Centauri laser tank with nasty dual can-openers, moving south. Since we were both moving, our first shots missed. As it moved past us into the village center, it disappeared off our scanners, so we reversed to get it before it picked off our light vehicles. We went down the road and our opponent announced his presence with a laser shot that damaged our scanner. Gauss bolt and laser beam crisscrossed through the superheated air as we banged away at each other. Now, the speed of the heavy tank became a liability; the Centauri had taken cover among the houses and it would take time for our behemoth to enter built-up terrain (moving would also throw off our aim). There were more hits on our scanner and propulsion systems. Fortunately, however, a few hits from our big gun managed to dispatch the Centauri to wherever mercenaries regroup.

With most of the Centauris destroyed and our objectives taken, we had accomplished our mission and earned both glory and cash. It was too bad about Terminator and Sparky, but wherever they were, we knew they were glad to see us split their shares.



Debriefing

All in all, the battle went well for Peckforce. We reached the village just in time to prevent the Centauri recon tanks from overrunning their objectives. We did lose two of our five vehicles, partially because they engaged the enemy piecemeal as a result of the tangle at the bridge. Other than better traffic control, the choice of a hover was probably unwise; a better armored recon tank could have reached the village just as fast.

The key to this battle was our heavy tank, or rather its use as a command vehicle. Heavy tanks and self-propelled guns are too unwieldy unless human-controlled (or unless they can travel straight down a road).

In turn, the battle demonstrated that the most important vehicle in *Fireteam* is the command tank. Players who enjoy zipping about the battlefield should pick helicopters and hovercraft. Those who like point-blank gun duels should pick heavier vehicles. For the most part, the rigidity of computer-controlled units means the command unit is the only piece that can function as a reliable reserve, reinforcing threatened areas or maneuvering for a flank shot.

But don't be fooled by the size of a vehicle. Although a heavy tank mounts three weapons, only one can be brought to bear on a given target. The secondary weapons can be useful for firing smoke or high-explosive ammunition against infantry, or as spares should the main weapon be damaged. But unlike the gargantuan tanks in *Ogre/GEV*, big vehicles can't take out armored divisions in a single volley. Further, our battle with the two smaller tanks showed that enough rounds will damage even the most heavily armored target. The best defense is positioning vehicles correctly. Even in the 23rd Century, the vulnerable spots are the flanks and rear. This is especially important for units like hovercraft and helicopters, which have "glass" tails. Conversely, when human-controlled, the airborne craft can maneuver quickly for a flank shot.

Finding cover under fire is a tricky proposition. Sometimes, a helicopter or hovercraft can quickly move out of firing range or line of sight, but a heavy tank will find it difficult to get out of the way. Sometimes, the only defense is to lay smoke or grit teeth and fire back.

As the game amply demonstrated, *Fireteam* puts a lot of strain on the command vehicle. Unfortunately, the load is usually overwhelming. For example, datalinking enables a player to see the sensor scans from other vehicles and get a true picture of the battle, but datalinking means a player can't control his tank or fire his weapons. In the middle of a firefight, it takes great self-control to cease firing and absorb hits while issuing orders to other units. The only solution is to park somewhere safe, or plot a long movement path in advance, before datalinking. The alternative is to buy a cheap command tank or recon chopper and sit outside the battle giving orders. But this reduces the most flexible combat unit to a spectator. So, for this commander, once the battle starts, it's everyone for himself. One factor is certain, however, those aliens will be back — breathing murder instead of merger. CGW

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The Rising Evan

CARRIER STRIKE

A Campaign Replay (Part II)

by M. Evan Brooks

Carrier Strike is one of the few simulations that this reviewer just could not put down. Thus, this replay will cover the campaign, but from the Japanese side. Also, strategic and tactical suggestions will be offered for the player's edification.

I. Coral Sea

It is 8 May, 1942. My assignment is to seize Port Moresby and cause as much damage to the American fleet as possible. Enemy activity is noted as heavy, but I am confident that my carriers will carry the day. Since I have four carriers (*Hiryu*, *Soryu*, *Kaga* and *Akagi*), I am sure that I outgun the American opposition.

	Japanese	American
Fighters	11	68
Dive-Bombers	22	111
Torpedo Bombers	22	45
Medium Bombers	02	-0-
Float Planes	111	-0-
Patrol Planes	-0-	03
Victory Points: Mission	856	-0-
Damage	3,092	105

As I am to learn later, the Americans get three fleet carriers — *Yorktown*, *Enterprise*, and *Hornet*. Utilizing Japanese float planes (a tremendous advantage; the Japanese do not have to divert dive bombers from their more "critical" tasks), I find the American carriers in short order. Multiple strikes (three in a day) lead to the sinking of all three American carriers as well as two heavy cruisers, a light cruiser and four destroyers (an additional nine destroyers suffer varying degrees of damage). My losses are minimal; minor damage to the *Hiryu*, a battleship and two heavy cruisers and a destroyer (although a light cruiser and three destroyers are sunk), but the loss of American carriers is devastating.

Early spotting efforts coupled with the Japanese ability to strike with a longer range yield a tremendous advantage. The worst possible scenario is to begin with the Japanese and American forces within close proximity of each other. However, when one must close to engage, the advantage is with the Japanese. It is disappointing that the Japanese dive bombers can only deliver a 250-lb bomb payload (as opposed to the American 1,000-pounder), but the better Japanese torpedo bombers make up for the deficiency in this early part of the Pacific War.

	Japanese	American
Fighters	14	59
Fighter-Bombers	32	94
Dive Bombers	30	41
Torpedo-Bombers	03	05
Medium Bombers	02	-0-
Float Planes	12	-0-
Patrol Planes	-0-	02
Victory Points: Mission	504	-0-

II. Midway

There is NO Midway. The Americans are too weak to risk a major engagement and simply decline battle. Another 1,000 points of mission success.

III. Port Moresby II

It is 16 July 1942. The American fleet decides to give battle rather than surrender Port Moresby and the stepping stone to the Australian mainland. I only get three Japanese carriers (*Hiryu*, *Kaga* and *Akagi*), but I am undeterred — To the Glory of the Emperor!

The battle lasts for three days, much to my surprise. The *Wasp* had been sunk at the conclusion of day two, and I had not expected the Americans to stick around for more. But they did not withdraw, so I was able to cause additional damage. Since the Japanese fleet lacks radar, one must insure that sufficient float planes have been launched to give some warning. Even so, some American strikes seem to come unannounced, but luckily, they are small.

Confident that the Japanese surface fleet outguns the Americans, I eagerly give battle, only to suffer moderate damage. In fact, by day three, the surface fleet disengages on its own. My consolation is that they have given more than they have received. Actually, my tactics have not been pretty; I was just able to find the Americans early and launch often. In fact, this is the key to success — like basic infantry tactics: find, fix and destroy. However, unlike land combat operations, a mobile reserve is a waste of assets. Use it or lose it!

Three American carriers have been sunk (*Lexington*, *Sara-*

toga and *Wasp*), as well as two heavy cruisers and three destroyers. American ships damaged include a battleship, a light cruiser, three destroyers and an oiler. My damage is minimal on my three fleet carriers, although the light carrier *Shoho* is going to be in dry dock for four months. A destroyer has been sunk, and damage incurred by two light cruisers, two destroyers and a transport (the latter of which was hit by land-based aircraft staging from Port Moresby). Overall, another successful battle.

	Japanese	American
Fighters	15	-0-
Fighter-Bombers	01	57
Dive-Bombers	21	31
Torpedo-Bombers	19	29
Medium Bombers	08	-0-
Float Planes	-0-	-0-
Patrol Planes	-0-	-0-
Victory Points: Mission	463	-0-
Damage	1,460	313

IV. Milne Bay

26 March 1943, and I must transport troops to Milne Bay and engage the enemy. Enemy opposition is expected to be moderate, and my three carriers should be sufficient to teach the impetuous Americans another lesson in carrier warfare. Initial launches occur at 0640, and strikes rage back and forth across the seas. The Japanese manage to stage three strikes during the day, and when it is over, two Allied Fleet carriers are sunk — the *Essex* and the British *Victorious*. British carriers can be employed to the Pacific to assist the American when losses are high. In this case, it is the first and last appearance of the British; they must have learned not to challenge Imperial Forces. However, Nippon has not emerged unscathed. The *Shoho* has been sunk and the *Shokaku* damaged. Only carriers have incurred damage on both sides, but with the American withdrawal from battle, it simply was impossible for the Japanese to cause additional damage.

	Japanese	American
Fighters	-0-	-0-
Fighter-Bombers	01	38
Dive-Bombers	23	20
Torpedo-Bombers	29	14
Medium Bombers	02	-0-
Float Planes	-0-	01
Patrol Planes	-0-	-0-
Victory Points: Mission	190	-0-
Damage	944	-0-
Campaign Totals:		
Victory Points:	14,013	-0-
Damage	8,255	534

Given the American declining battle often, campaign totals are:

Victory Points:	9,823	-0-
Damage	7,311	534

It looks like a long haul for the Americans.

V. Milne Bay II

28 August, 1943, and enemy opposition is expected to be heavy. That is fine; Japanese morale is high, and I am optimistic. My four carriers (*Hiryu*, *Soryu*, *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*)

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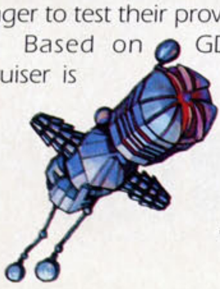
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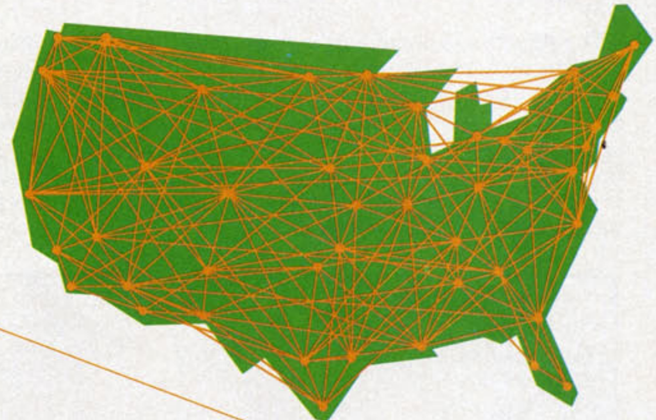
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are ready. Once again, I am lucky to find the American carriers first and strikes are promptly launched in the early morning hours. The enemy carriers seem to number a fleet carrier and two light carriers (later discovered to be the *Bunker Hill* and the *Monterrey* and *Cabot* respectively). Much to my chagrin, my strikes seem to concentrate on the smaller carriers and ignore the fleet carrier. I cannot explain this aberration, but it just means that additional strikes are required for maximum damage.

The American counter-strike is savaged by my CAP; literally fifty percent of the American strike is splashed. However, a second strike bypasses my CAP entirely; luckily, it is small and only a single hit is made on the *Soryu*. My second strike is prepared and launched by 0920, but American flak is beginning to take its toll. The American response to my strike is destroyed by my CAP, and literally no aircraft remain to threaten my control of the seas.

	Japanese	American
Fighter	-0-	-0-
Fighter Bombers	17	41
Dive Bombers	34	23
Torpedo-Bombers	30	19
Medium Bombers	-0-	04
Float Planes	-0-	-0-
Patrol Planes	02	03
Victory Points: Mission	1,033	-0-
Damage	466	6

VI. Milne Bay III

September 28 1943, and enemy opposition is expected to be very heavy. When I examine my order of battle, I am reassured. I have six carriers (*Hiryu*, *Soryu*, *Shokaku*, *Zuikaku*, *Junyo* and *Hiyo*). This should allow me sufficient forces to destroy the American carriers as well as bomb the enemy airfields!

However, the Americans are difficult to find. I begin to worry — how many carriers does he have, and where are they? In the meanwhile, I arm my planes with HE and strike Milne Bay. When I do find the American carriers around 1200, there are only two carriers. Where is the rest of his force? My strike is not as successful as I hope, since the American task force disappears into a cloud bank, and it takes 40 minutes for my planes to find them.

American flak has grown more effective, and I lose 17 aircraft to flak alone. While I secure multiple hits on the fleet carrier, the light carrier emerges unscathed. My second strike is more successful, but my third strike attacks a surface force only. A bad sighting report has forced me to waste a strike!

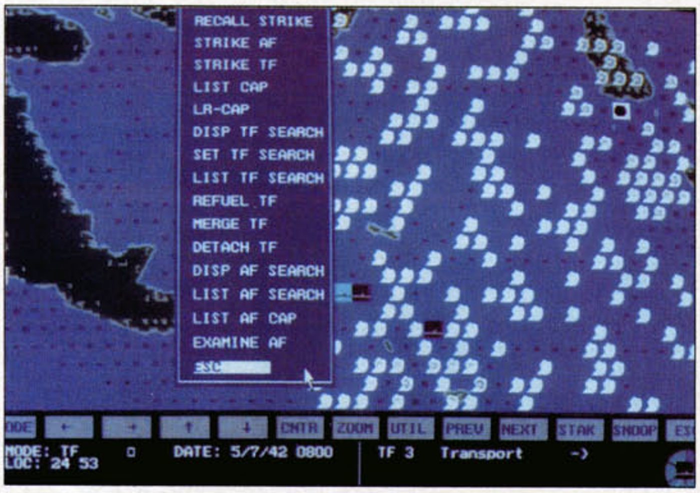
Day two of the battle is tense. I receive a report of a 235+ strike coming at my fleet. Where have the Americans been able to mount such a strike from? The answer becomes obvious — most of it is land-based. B-25s hit a transport, but their assault against my carriers is faulty, and they get one hit from 40 aircraft. An American sub hits my oiler, and the battle ends after day two as the Americans withdraw.

I was only able to sink a light carrier (*Langley*), although the fleet carrier (*Intrepid*) will be laid up in repairs for five months. Three American surface ships suffer minor damage, but overall, it is not the imposing victory that I had been hoping for.

VII. Milne Bay IV

The Americans have licked their wounds for months. But now they come out; opposition is expected to be heavy. The months of March and April seemed to offer battle, but American Forces declined to engage. The date: 1 May 1944. I plan to destroy the American carriers once and for all.

My four carriers (*Hiryu*, *Soryu*, *Shokaku*, and *Zuikaku*) should be enough for the task. Contact is made early, and now I begin to worry. My flak is 1649; the American task force has a flak value of 3472. Will this cause a problem? Between the American CAP and the flak, I literally lose 50% of my strike — 75 planes shot down. And my strikes have caused little damage; mounting everything remaining in a 'go-for-broke' strike, I get zero hits. In fact, only four fighters return; my bomber forces are gone forever. I now realize that the tide has irrevocable turned, and hope to escape with as little damage as possible.



With the Americans pursuing, I use my surface fleet as a pawn. It manages to engage the carrier task force, and allows my damaged carrier force to escape to the north. It is severely mauled, but breaks contact at night, and I decline to continue the battle.

VIII. Turn Tail & Run

The final two months of the Pacific War consist of my fleet cowering in its bases. I refuse to engage; I cannot take on the American carrier fleet, and it is counterproductive to attempt to do so; better to surrender a thousand points per month.

The final campaign score: Japan: 30,173,U.S.: 2,720.

IX. Lessons Learned

1. FIND THE ENEMY EARLY. The Japanese have a tremendous advantage with their float planes; the Americans have to divert bombers. But always engage in search. While the default pattern may give you clues, be careful and be willing to adjust the pattern based on your intuition. Search planes should be launched no later than 0540, so that their reports come back at first light. A early launch (e.g. 0400) can be counterproductive if the planes sail over a nearby enemy fleet under cover of darkness.

2. LAUNCH EARLY; LAUNCH OFTEN. CAP should be in the air before the search planes ever leave; it can be launched in darkness without ill-effect and it should be present at first light. I recommend using two-thirds of your fighters for CAP. As for the bombers, begin launching at 0540 or 0600; do not assign a target until you get the maximum two turns of launches aloft. If there are no enemy task forces available, assign an enemy airfield as the target — even if it is 500 miles away. The strike will begin to move off, and it can be redirected to a task force when necessary. If nothing is found, the strike will return when it realizes that it cannot accomplish the mission. One can launch up to three strikes per day; if possible, do it. WARNING: Version 1.2x has corrected some of the AI flaws. It does not allow a computer opponent to sortie out until it has accumulated a reasonable task force, but more important, it checks time in air for aircraft. Three strikes per day will cause an attrition rate that is more historical, but totally unacceptable to the human player. If you are using version 1.2x (available for download on GEnie), NEVER launch the third strike unless you are positive that you can sink a carrier, and even then, consider the consequences.

3. USE IT OR LOSE IT. Naval tactics do not use reserve forces. Captain Hughes' classic treatise *Fleet Tactics* repeats this maxim — ignore it at your own peril. While it may be acceptable to unready those four torpedo bombers that you could not fit into a larger strike, it is not smart to hold back a viable strike and wait for a better target. Remember, strikes can be retargeted; planes on sinking ships are flotsam.

4. DO NOT OVERSTAY YOUR WELCOME. Discretion is the better part of valor, etc. You've got to know when to withdraw. Losing carriers is not a winning strategy; the Japanese especially have to understand that eventually, they cannot win. Amass a large lead, and don't risk it for minimal return.

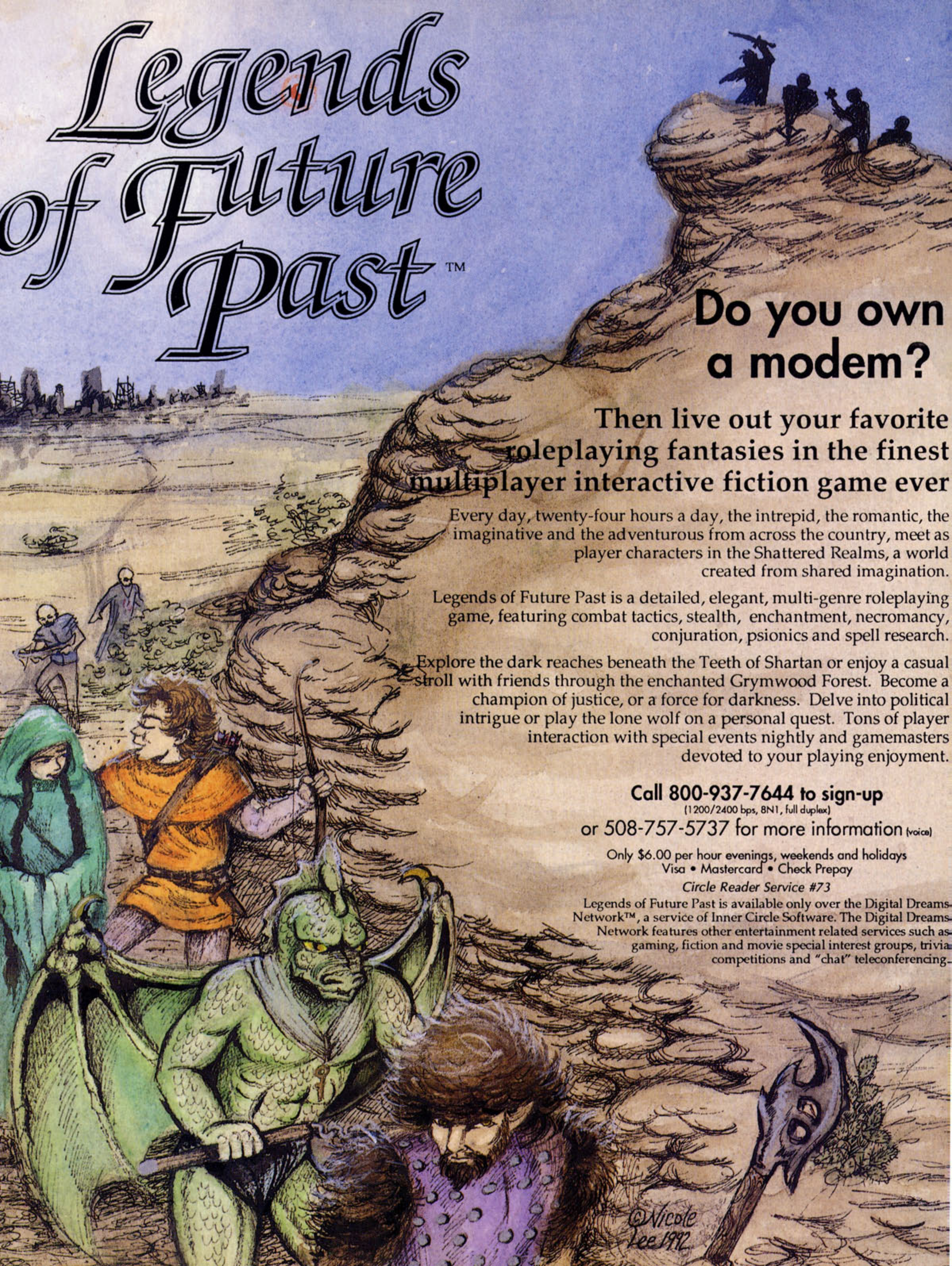
5. SURFACE COMBATANTS: THEY WERE EXPENDABLE. The name of the simulation is *Carrier Strike*. Carriers are the victory point makers. Surface combatants are useful to mix up the carriers, but have little utility otherwise. In fact, the carrier is probably overemphasized. Victory points for land bombing is minimal; thus, one should always be armed for naval attacks (Armor Piercing and Torpedoes) and not ground targets (High Explosive). This is historically incorrect, but one must make adjustments.

6. CHEAT. Finally, if you are still having trouble, you can 'cheat' your way to victory. Besides, who's going to tell on you? Begin a scenario, and save it immediately. Restart the saved game, only this time with the computer as the other side. Take notes on order of battle and locations. Finally, quit again and resume as your original side; you have just broken the Purple Code.

Also, remember that carrier strikes are random affairs. A supremely successful strike can be replayed into a disaster just by the luck of the draw. Save your game before a strike, and if things are less than optimal, try it again.

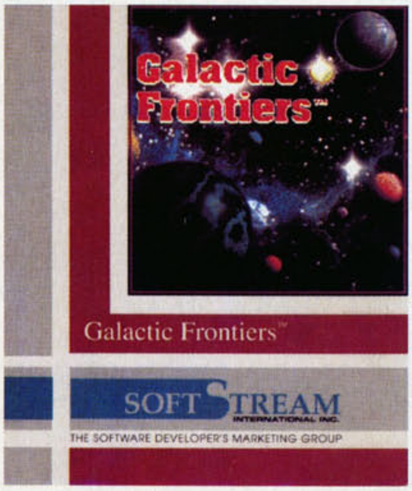
Actually, the AI can be handily defeated, so one should rarely have to resort to this Draconian fix. But for the novice wanting to impress, well... CGW





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Spinward Go The Spaceships



Settling SoftStream's GALACTIC FRONTIERS

by Samuel B. Baker II

TITLE:	Galactic Frontiers
SYSTEM:	Macintosh
# PLAYERS:	One to four (on the same machine)
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Russel Lowke
PUBLISHER:	Soft Stream South Dartmouth, MA

It is always nice when a new hat is thrown into the ring of computer gaming. Both **SoftStream Internations** (another "SSI") and their *Galactic Frontiers* are new additions to this hobby/community. While SoftStream has launched its product line with a host of Macintosh games (mostly based on popular card and parlor games), *Galactic Frontiers* is the "different" title in their product line.

Cut from the same cloth as *Reach for the Stars*, this game casts one in the role of a Warlord trying to impose his will upon 24 nearby planets. The events take place after the collapse of the First Empire, precipitated by inadequate communications that existed before the invention of a trans-light drive. The Warlord's task, then, is to reunite the remnants of this empire under his enforced leadership.

Simians In Space

Players begin with one planet and their choice of any of the four races; Humanoid, Simian, Amphibian or Insecta. Each turn every planet will produce a certain number of ships depending on the class of the planet, the amount of industrial development and the cost per ship. The cost per ship is set by the type of game one chooses to play or by the player before the game starts.

There are six different games: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Home Planet, Campaign and Custom. The first five games vary in their length, victory conditions, economic settings and other parameters. The custom game is completely configurable.

Every turn each system produces a certain number of economic points. The number produced may increase with time, depending on the game settings. These economic points are immediately converted into ships at a set rate determined at the start. Everything that one does to develop a planet costs one ship, except constructing a Star Gate or Star Cannon. Star Gates or Star Cannons (only one of these options can be active) require the expenditure of multiple ships over several turns. If two systems each have a Star Gate then travel between them takes one turn, no matter the distance. If a system has a Star Cannon, any ships moving from that system move at twice normal speed.

Normally, ships appear on the planet that produced them, but in the Home Planet game all ships are placed on one's starting system. Ships move a given number of points per turn. The number of turns that it will take to move to a planet can be found by grabbing a ship and dragging it over to the destination. At the standard movement setting, the maximum time a ship will take to reach a planet is five or six turns. Different numbers of ships from the same planet may be moved by pressing different combinations of the shift, command and option keys.

Random Demoralization

At the beginning of each game the planets are shuffled and distributed randomly over space and then the players (computer and human) are allocated. There are five statistics for each planet, all of which may be improved by one level a turn. Class (from one to nine) represents the economic ceiling for that system. Industry (from zero to nine) shows how much of that planet's potential has been developed. Fortifications (zero to *) indicates how many forts have been constructed. Each fort has the combat effectiveness of at least two ships in combat. Radar (also zero to nine) shows the strength of the sensors installed on the planet. The Tax rating (light to cruel) tells how heavily the beings there are being extorted.

The species have three ratings presented as percentage attributes: build (construction aptitude), attack (offensive warfare proclivity) and defense (defensive capacity). The Insecta are best at production, the Amphibians are strongest on defense, the Simians have the fiercest offensive punch and Humanoids have, as usual, the most balanced set of attributes.

At the beginning of a turn, random events are reported as applicable. Black holes, for example, delay ships for several turns and, once found, will be encountered every time a ship's path gets too near its location. Novas destroy the system they occur in. (Ouch!) Plague will reduce the number of ships in a system and its output for a number of turns. Eventually, a cure will be found and the effects disappear. Riots occur both as a random event and as a result of taxation. The system under rebellion reverts to the control of the player who had it the longest previously. Often, this will be the First Empire, which owns all neutral systems at the start.

Victory may be determined by points for battles fought and planets occupied and developed, or by conquering all the planets. In both cases, a turn limit is set.

There are two questions facing the player each turn: do I spend ships to build up my infrastructure on this planet, and where do I engage the enemy? As quickly as possible, one should send groups of four to five ships to all the neutral systems that one can

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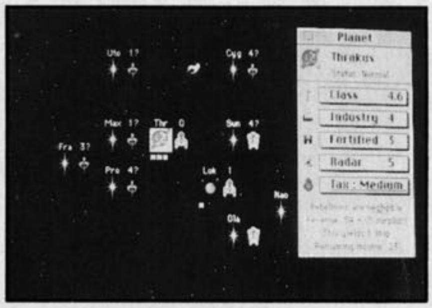
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see at the start. Develop planets immediately and build forts. Forts defend better than ships and help quell those nasty tax rebellions. Start work on a Star Cannon right away. For a long time, the home system will provide the majority of one's might. Getting them to the action in a hurry can save the day. Build the radar on frontier planets up to four as fast as possible. Most times, it will then be possible to concentrate one's defense on the large incoming raids. Once one is in contact with the enemy, expansion should be carefully planned and executed one planet at a time. The other races will constantly be sending raids to the border systems. Until one needs a Star Cannon to get to an enemy planet, they should be eschewed as (under some options) the Star Cannon may then be pointed right back at oneself.

For one's first game the Insecta are the easiest to win with. They produce 25% more than the Simians and Amphibians, and thus provide the most rapid base for expansion. I have vivid memories of a game in which I played the Amphibians and felt big and bad having amassed c300 ships on one planet, ready for expansion. The next



turn, the Insecta showed up with c400 and I won. There were 29 ships and five forts left. The turn after, the c500 ship main body showed up and reduced the planet to rubble.

Customization and Criticism

Every parameter of this game can be altered, many may be turned off. For example, each of the random events may have its frequency raised or lowered and, in turn, each may be eliminated. I found it very easy to tailor the game to suit my preferences. Since the preferences may be saved, there is no need to constantly recreate them. There are also options that make it easy to have multiple players share the same machine. Each player's systems are centered on the screen and the planets are named differently for each person.

To pick some nits, it would help if there was a way to page through all of one's planets each turn to make sure that one is not skipped, or if the planets could change color or background when they are modified. Further, radar should be better explained. A popup appears when the radar strength reaches four, saying that one may now detect a raid that is two turns away. There is no explanation for levels five through nine. Radar also only seems to work for one system, so one cannot set up picket systems as a tripwire for raids to the interior of one's empire. It seems like this should be a natural strategy.

This is a very good beer-and-pretzels game. One can play a few turns while waiting for a download to complete, or at lunch time. The game is hard to walk away from as it is always tempting to see how the turn will be resolved, much like trying to stop eating popcorn. If one is looking for the next *Reach for the Stars*, this isn't it. It is a simpler game, though quite good at what it tries to accomplish. Popcorn anyone? CGW



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Circle Reader Service #80

Sneak Preview

Spoiled by War

Sneak Preview of Raw Entertainment's Spoils of War

by Dave Arneson

DIARY: April 14, 1799 — One stinking jungle after another. The last settlement we tried to establish perished within the fortnight. This land consumes lives like a fire consumes wood. We pray that the navy will deliver more colonists soon or the Bluevanians will overrun us. Already their disgusting settlements dot the land wherever we look.

In The Beginning

A perilous new world awaits the unwary in **RAW Entertainment's** *Spoils of War (Spoils)*. *Spoils* is touted as a strategic/management wargame. Players do not assume the identity of an individual explorer (as in *Seven Cities of Gold*) or the role of an Enterprising ship's captain (as in *Uncharted Waters*). Rather, one assumes the prodigious responsibilities associated with the Chief of Colonial Exploration and Development for a burgeoning colonial "Wannabe."



The initial phase of the game requires astute recruitment of explorers on the player's behalf. These explorers come in three types: Governors (with the highest proficiency in settlement and administration), Generals (most proficient at exploration and fighting) and Admirals (most effective in battling enemy ships and transporting explorers and gold). Later in the game, Commanders can be recruited to administer Ports and larger settlements.

Once the initial recruitment is completed, it is necessary to consider the colony's expenditures in research and development. It is worthwhile to consider developing superior ships and tactics at the start of the game. Such "technology" will definitely be useful as the game progresses. The other options are best left till later.

Then, each explorer must be equipped. There are limits as to how many elements one explorer can handle. When an Admiral is recruited he comes with some ships (2), supplies and some money. Naturally, one will need to buy ships almost immediately because the competition almost always ends up with fleets of eight ships within a few turns. So, the very first logistical decision must be to make sure the Admiral has eight ships, three-to-four Marines and at least 6,000 supply points. Naval battles use up supplies at a fierce rate, so stock up whenever possible.

Much the same has to be done with Generals and Governors. Generals are better at exploring since they use up fewer resources. At the start, they should be equipped with two depots, two engineers, and a dozen colonists. Generals, assigned later in the game, should bring over gold and colonists. Then, it will be possible to trade off the colonists to the governor and use the gold to raise troops in the settlements. This will set up the General to prey on the competition and the natives. Generals assigned to combat duty should have, at least, 6,000 supply points (3 depots) when they take to the field.

Governors are better at making settlements and gathering 'profit' (plunder), hence they use up fewer resources than Generals when doing this. At the start, they should be equipped with two depots, two engineers, and a dozen colonists. Later, they may require a garrison of troops, but colonists are the key to developing the New World.

Commanders are administrative lackeys. They garrison important locations, so they will need plenty of troops. Beyond that, one merely needs to keep them loyal and well-trained. Indeed, one needs to keep all explorer classes well-rested and loyal. This only takes a little time and money and as well worth it, since it is hard to send out new explorers to replace them. Plus, whenever an explorer is lost, everything that they have is lost with them.

Occasionally, an explorer will volunteer their services. When one lacks funds, this is a great boon. One can use the explorer immediately or, here's a nasty idea, exploit them and dismiss them. It is entirely feasible to have the unfortunate sell everything they own; 'unload' the gold into the player's own

coffers and then, dismiss the boob. Needless to say this will not do one's reputation a lot of good, but hey, a gold piece is a gold piece.

DIARY: February 3, 1798 —

We finally finished loading the colonists on the ships. I am uneasy about not taking any troops with us. The Admiral assures us that his ships and Marines are all the protection that we will need. We pray that this is true.



This Land Is Your Land

Then, it is ship launching time. The game generates terrain as the player explores (not when the game is set-up as in *Seven Cities of Gold*). Hence, the face of the world is forever changing. Eventually, each terrain will be displayed on the map. Once this occurs, the player needs to stop and unload an explorer on that terrain, *immediately*. Interestingly enough, Admirals can only find open sea and beaches, while Generals and Governors can only find the other terrain types (but not beaches and open sea).

This latter fact can lead to a weird tactic. If one takes one of their Admirals and sails him around the enemy colony, the enemy can quickly find himself stuck on a small island and only able to leave by getting ships there.

I Claim This Land In The Name Of..

Players had just as well get used to the idea that they are going to go through colonists like Howard Hughes went through tissue. One needs to establish a shuttle to bring new colonists continually from one's homeland to the colonies. One never gets the colonies themselves developed enough to provide colonists for one's newer colonies. Fortunately, one can, at least, raise armies in the colonies!

By and by, pictures appear to indicate that a settlement is taking hold. This is nice. Visual feedback is always welcome. The pictures are pretty, but they will never be confused with great art. Of course, given a choice, most gamers will opt for greater depth in game play rather than for great art, anyway. There is also a minimal amount of sound support. Again, it was interesting, but not great. Of course, one doesn't really count on sound support to make wargames interesting.

I suggest establishing a port early on and then, planting

settlements close by. Then, it should be safe to send a few Generals inland to find some high profit areas for future settlements and mines. Exploitation is the name of the game, so it is wise to develop each area claimed to the max, so keep those colonists coming.

Further, each Governor and General should have two Engineers, respectively. Then, it should be possible to accomplish virtually any task one could set for them to do within the context of the New World. One should also keep a good army near any frontier shared with an enemy. Of course, players who are using the 'Cayas' option must also watch out for the local natives who will not take quietly to being exploited.

DIARY: May 18, 1804. Yet another foul Bluevanian colony has felt our wrath today. As usual we walked in and took what we wanted. There are rumors that the Blues are sending an army to halt our deprivations. I doubt if they have the courage to face us. In any event I will lead the army back to the port and send the gold home. His highness will be most pleased.

If the competition is close by, an offensive operation is never out of line. In 'Spoils,' any General or Governor from any side can walk into a settlement and profit from the effort.

Sea battles are even simpler. For starters, there is no wind direction just wind strength. Ships may be deployed in a band two to three squares deep along one edge of the playing area. The player is limited in the number of orders which can be issued per turn with regard to: number of troops per ship, sail settings, ammunition type and ship's heading. All this must be done by issuing orders to the individual ships and only one order per ship per turn is allowed, so it is impossible to change the ship's heading and slow down at the same time.

Basically, sea battles are slug fests. One will want to keep the ships with Marines on them in reserve so that they can board Enemy ships late in the battle. Naturally, since ships have a chance to sink when they take a lot of hull damage, it is wise to avoid closing with the Marine-bearing ships until one is ready to board the enemy ships.

Only ships with Marines can board and only a few of one's ships can carry arines. On the other hand, concentrate on destroying the ships carrying the enemy Marines and do not worry about being boarded.

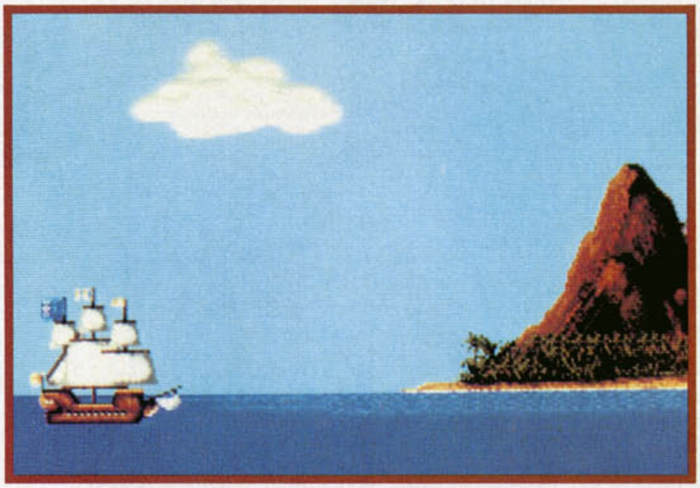
Boarding is hard to accomplish, but capturing ships is the only way to get more than eight ships in a fleet. By capturing enemy ships, an Admiral can have as many as fifteen ships under his command, but this leads to another problem. Since ships always move in the same order, it is often hard to control the traffic congestion. For example, one can only give one order per ship per turn. So, shortening sail and forming a line to face the enemy takes several turns and the foe will be at hand before one can get organized. It would have been nice to have a 'delay' option here to simplify things for the Admirals. As it stands, though, the best tactic is to mass along one side and overwhelm part of the enemy fleet. Then, the rest can be dealt with (preferably, going after an enemy's 'higher' numbered ships). That way, once all the enemy supplies are destroyed, his remaining ships will surrender.

Dirty Tricks Department

Unscrupulous gamers can activate one other country as a

"live" player. Then, they can have that country *always* give *all* its money to them as a gift (yeah, that's it) at the start of each turn. Since this other human player never buys any explorers, the computer skips over all this other "human's" moves and the "dirty player" will not be bothered.

Missive From The Colonial Governor (Conclusions)



Spoils of War tries to be three types of games: Colonial Exploration, Colonial Exploitation and Colonial Warfare. Unfortunately, the three do not mesh well into the overall game system. The winner is the one that ends up making the three elements work the best, but this is neither smooth nor fun. Indeed, none of the elements seem to have been properly developed.

My overall impression is that there is a lot of game here. Frankly, almost *too* much game. Most aspects are pretty complex and, when combined with the numerous events occurring, the player is likely to get bogged down. With thirty or more characters working for one, the tasks seem endless rather than edifying and, unlike many games, it is not possible to put any mundane administrative duties on 'automatic.'

There is depth to this game and there are problems. Each game will be significantly different. This is a game of choices and it is not obvious which choices are good and which ones are bad. Thus, each game will present the player with different challenges. Frankly, that makes up for a lot of shortcomings. So, *I'm* willing to keep playing and I can't wait for the production version, but those who want a user-friendly game with state-of-the-art graphics and sound are looking in the wrong "new world." CGW



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Excerpts from the latest *CGW Presents* Book *Global Conquest:*

The Official Strategy Guide



by Alan Emrich

Alan Emrich's strategy guide for Global Conquest *has an entire chapter devoted to the use of diplomacy to win the game. CGW presents a portion of that chapter for our readers' enjoyment and edification.*

While it would be impossible to transform you into a combination of Tallyrand, Bismarck and Kissinger overnight, some diplomatic principles (and unprincipled techniques) apply nicely to this "social element" of human player interaction in *Global Conquest.*

"No Fault" vs. "Down and Dirty" Divorce

At some point, you probably will want to dispose of all diplomatic pretenses, shuck off those constraining treaties and give your opponent a good thrashing. There are two, diametrically opposite approaches to declaring war on another player with whom you have a treaty: 1) by a formal redressing of troops for a subsequent, proper "stand up" fight after announcing your intentions well in advance or, 2) by using every power at your disposal to launch as cruel a sneak attack as possible the moment you're able to.

Those who would employ the former, honorable, method of declaring war will not find much help in reading this chapter any further. Treacherous, back-stabbing weasels, however, are about to learn some of the best dirty tricks in the book and are encouraged to read on.

Remembering Pearl Harbor

Since you haven't stopped reading, it is fair to assume that you are (at least potentially) the dastardly type. Good. *Global Conquest,* when played with other human players, is the right game for you. The best way to carry out this Pearl Harbor technique is to position your units in good combat positions near the intended victim's, particularly on his economic objectives, during the treaty-enforced period of mutual non-aggression. Be sure to give your infantry units plenty of time to entrench on these sites and other good, defensive terrain from which the opponent's units can be attacked. Once in position, drop the last vestiges of your treaty. A cease-fire can be removed unilaterally in one turn, but alliances and teammate status take two and three turns, respectively, to break on your own. This is unfortunate, as it will usually signal your intended victim of your intentions in time for him to take some precautions.

To achieve greater surprise, make fewer preparations. To lull your opponent into the proverbial "false sense of security" you can create by sharing a long term cease-fire with him. Then, suddenly, in one Planning Phase, order your troops to ruthlessly march against your "friend." At the last possible second before the Execution Phase begins, declare war by breaking the cease-fire, leaving your victim no time to react that turn.

The Zen of Diplomacy

The goal of diplomacy is the same as strategy or tactics — to improve your position. Diplomacy, however, does so by mobilizing OPFs ("Other People's Forces"). Since all the players start with comparable size forces and since the early phases of most *Global Conquest* games are an exponential growth phase, even small advantages, if created early enough, can mushroom into big advantages by the middle of the game.

The 25% alliance bonus, for instance, can start from the very first turn of the game and can be double or triple dipped per turn if you are a skilled diplomat and take the time to pursue it. An alliance with every player in the game is the diplomatic "crowning achievement" of *Global Conquest*, but, of itself, will not win you the game. It is inevitable in this game that, at some point, you will have to fight *someone.*

Diplomacy takes as much practice as military strategy or tactics and the first "Koran" in *The Zen of Diplomacy* is the "prisoner's dilemma." The name "prisoner's dilemma" was coined for this phenomenon in the 1950's by a mathematician who had just seen the opera Tosca. If you know *Tosca*, you will think of the choices faced by Tosca and the jailer. Here is a *Miami Vice* version of the same situation:

The Prisoner's Dilemma:

One afternoon you find yourself standing beside your late-model BMW facing a small park. On the seat of your car are two briefcases: one contains bags of a white, powdery substance that the Drug Enforcement Agency says is hazardous to your moral well-being — and, thus, is of considerable commercial value. The other contains bags of a white, powdery substance that your mother says is "good for you" —and, hence, is of no commercial value whatsoever.

On the far side of the park is a "business associate" standing beside his late-model Porsche. In his car resides a briefcase filled with dollar bills. There is, probably, also another one, presumably filled with yesterday's newspapers.

Strolling about the park in a leisurely fashion is a member of the "city's finest," so neither of you will have the opportunity to do any kind of on-site inspection of the goods which you are about to transfer.

The associate reaches into his car and pulls out a briefcase. He starts walking for the bench in the park where you will make the hand off. The time has come.

Which briefcase do you take with you?

This is the prisoner's dilemma: a situation where two parties have the choice of "cooperating" and working together or "defecting" and not working together.

As a Diplomat, your goal is to anticipate and influence when your partner cooperates and defects. The most consistent method to assure this control is to show your partner how your interest and his are mutually served by either cooperating or defecting.

One issue which you will need to address early on is how long is your relation with this partner going to be? The shorter the relation,

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The Moral Justification Chart

Beneficial:
"I am only trying to assist you in gaining allies by sympathy."
"That which does not destroy you makes you stronger."
"Yeah, I attacked you. Isn't it great? Now they think that we're enemies!"
Big Lies:
"I have legitimate territorial claims here."
"I'm liberating your oppressed peoples."
"I didn't want to waste the bullets we issued with your name on them."
"I have no further territorial demands."
"I want to ensure peace reigns throughout this region."
"Your unit's chemical emissions were destroying the ozone layer."
"My military is no longer under my control."
"You must be seeing things."
Diplomatic:
"This is only temporary."
"Consider it a compliment that someone is paying attention to you."
"I could stop, of course. For a price."
"I'll let you attack me next time. (Wink, wink, nudge, nudge)."
Fated:
"The omens were favorable."
"Think of this as global Darwininsm in action."
"Because you were there."
"Haven't you ever heard of Manifest Destiny?"
"Summa sedes non capit duos" (The highest seat does not hold two)
"My horoscope today advised me against long relationships."
He Might Win:
"This was a preemptive move."
"I believe in doing unto others before they do unto me."
He is Winning:
"You're winning. Next stupid question."
"I don't think the winner has the right to ask that question."
His Fault:
"I believe that we have a misunderstanding on YOUR part."
"Your feeble attempts at a diplomatic solution have failed miserably."
"And you believed me?"
"I'm only respond to your covert hostility."
"You misrepresented your actions as hostile."
"What made you think that I Wouldn't do that?"
"You shouldn't have given me all that support."
In Your Face:
"So sue me."
"Well, what good is power if you don't use it?"
"Don't give me that 'Et tu?' jazz!"
"Look, If I'm so two-faced, would I be wearing THIS one?
"I'm not speaking to you."
Oh, That?:
"That was just a training exercise."
"That was just a mere 'border incident.'"
"That was just a large reconnaissance-in-force."
"That was just my new fund-raising technique."
Oops!:
"Did I forget to mention that you were in my way?"
"Oh, was that you I invaded?"
"My dog ate the manual. I didn't know I could do that."
"Temporary insanity."
"I hit the wrong mouse button — twice."
"I'm still learning this game. How do I pull back?"
Revenge:
"This is payback."
Technical Difficulties:
"What? I'm having line-noise problems. What you're seeing could be a COM glitch."
"Sorry, these LCD screens are just sooooo hard to read."
"It must be that new computer virus that's going around."
"Um, I think my keyboard jammed."
"What happened? I let my (spouse, child, friend, etc.) take over for a moment while I went to (answer the door, go to the bathroom, get something to drink, etc.)."
Third Parties:
"I was talked into this action by ________." (the victim's closest ally)
"The devil made me do it."
"It was either rally them against you or they would rally against me."
"I have to do this on the advice of my attorneys."
"Alan Emrich recommended this in his book."

the more reward you will gain from defecting. Here are some choices for how long this relationship is going to be:

1. It will last a turn.
2. It will last the duration of the game.
3. It will last for duration of many games.
4. It will last a lifetime.

To ease up on the "hard feelings" that show up when the time comes to defect, make sure that the person you are playing with has a clear understanding of this defection in the same time frame that you are committing it in.

Ways of Defecting

The "Pearl Harbor" method is one of several ways of defecting. Some others are the "go your own way" and "draw the line here" endings, each of which is more peaceful and forgoes any immediate opportunity for a surprise attack. In future games with these same players, these more amicable endings can pay dividends by establishing you as someone who is reasonably trustworthy.

What To Do With That Ugly Knife Sticking in Your Back

Handling a defection crisis is the ultimate diplomatic test and there are many choices you make in reaction to it. The reflexive response is to yell, "*Traitor!*" and throw everything you have against that slimy so-and-so while your soul is brimming over with righteous indignation and blood lust. However, this seldom works out well.

Other choices include "turning the other cheek," which is effective if the defector is small and he realizes that you have been protecting him from someone a lot bigger and meaner than you are. The "run for cover" approach is designed to get you out of the way of the defector so that you can conduct a "Flavian" (or "guerrilla") defense. Hopefully, it won't be too long before the defector has trod on the toes of another player, at which point you can switch from a Flavian defense into a "let's you and me get this rat" combined offense by joining the defector's latest victim.

Defection is not the end of the world, however. It is merely a reshuffling of the deck. It just means that, in addition to playing *hard* with the units on the screen, you are going to have to play *smart* with the people around you.

The Moral Justification for Treachery

After ruthlessly stabbing someone (or "defecting"), whether it is before his eyes, right under his nose or behind his back, he'll probably ask the usual victim's plaintiff plea, "Why?" Every victim wants to know "Why me?," "How could you do such a thing?" and so forth. Since you're not really a *bad* person, after all, here are some handy answers for those niggling little diplomatic questions that victims so often ask. After you've been caught red handed, these excuses should, at least, amuse the other players in the game and keep it "light" and "up" despite your contemptible, treacherous deeds. [Ed: The books contains almost 40% more one-liners and excuses than are presented here.]

Signing Off From the State Department

While diplomacy is, after all, just another means to the end of winning the game, many (brutal) players won't deal with others in any sort of diplomatic sense at all. They consider all attempts at diplomacy a simple waste of time. Perhaps they're right? In *Global Conquest*, time is very important and wasting it can have fatal results. Time, then, will be the subject of the next chapter. CGW



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One Korea or Two?

by Michael Peck

The following is a replay of *Conflict: Korea* by **Strategic Simulations, Inc.** The article focuses on the first month of the "Tomorrow's War" scenario, which postulates a surprise North Korean attack across the Demilitarized Zone in 1995. The UN player was played by Michael Peck, the Communist by Ken Hess.

June 25-30, 1995 (Turn 1)

SEOUL, Korea (Dissociated Press) — War returned to the Korean peninsula this morning, after North Korean troops launched a massive pre-dawn assault across the Demilitarized Zone. Reports are fragmentary, but North Korean forces are apparently pushing toward Seoul, the offensive creating heavy casualties on both sides. Fierce air battles can be seen in the skies overhead, but cloudy weather is hampering air support for United Nations troops. Although American forces are heavily committed in the Persian Gulf, a carrier battle group is reported en route to the Sea of Japan.

The North Korean plan was pure and simple — Blitzkrieg. The Communists had learned from 1950, when their offensive was dispersed on three axes. This time maximum force would be massed against Seoul, which is the closest city to the DMZ (victory is basically determined by capturing urban hexes). But the South Korean capital had to be captured within four or five weeks, before American reinforcements and dwindling supplies (no Soviet or Chinese aid this time) halted the offensive.

The North Koreans began by stripping the east coast of artillery and sending it west, where it could support the Seoul thrust. Massed artillery was a Communist trump in 1995, with more than a dozen huge artillery brigades available. Still, artillery is limited to a two-hex range and the border was so packed with NKPA (North Korean People's Army) troops that there was no room near the front. Indeed, the two unit-stacking limit, coupled with the huge armies on both sides, made congestion a major headache.



The Communist solution was to use the game's unit combination feature to combine the artillery into "super-brigades" of three or four brigades each. This let the artillery stack within range of the DMZ, although it made them more concentrated targets for airstrikes.

Air combat marked the beginning of the battle, with the North Korean air force taking heavy blows. Communist pilots had short and glorious careers, but every UN squadron committed to air superiority meant one less airstrike. Fortunately, cloudy weather mitigated the initial UN air attacks.

Combat this turn was predictably bloody along the heavily mined and booby-trapped border (casualties are multiplied along the DMZ). The game rewards high-odds attacks, so four massive NKPA corps overwhelmed the lone Republic of Korea (ROK) division north of Seoul, while other formations destroyed the outnumbered defenders to the northeast of the city. Overstacking blocked the defenders from retreating, and units which can't retreat are decimated. The survivors were overrun during the second Communist phase.

The UN player, with his troops outnumbered and strung out, agreed that Seoul would decide the game. The plan was to hold until US reinforcements (particularly aircraft) and ROK reservists arrived. ROK divisions scattered throughout the country marched toward Seoul, slowed by fleeing refugees which clogged the roads. This was a major problem in the hilly and largely roadless Korean peninsula where movement is channeled along highways. To ease congestion, ROK divisions were massed into single corps.

At the front, the defenders began the game entrenched, so there was little incentive to move. In the air, all Allied squadrons were allocated to air superiority; though the grunts on the ground cursed the lack of air strikes on the enemy hordes, winning air superiority would free more planes for ground attacks in the long run.

July 1 - 7 (Turn 2)

SEOUL, Korea (DP) — Intense fighting continues to rage throughout the Korean peninsula as North Korea continues its drive on Seoul. US Marines have arrived at the southern port of Pusan, but they are being delayed by refugees clogging the roads. Military sources say the ROK forces along the DMZ have been badly hurt, although the North Koreans have reportedly suffered heavy losses in men and equipment. One bright spot appears to be in the air, where clear skies have allowed Allied planes to achieve partial air superiority and begin interdicting Communist supply lines.

The UN moved first this turn, which meant it had to make its dispositions before seeing Communist movements. Fortunately, help was on the way as 15 ROK reserve divisions popped on the map. They were weak, but still potent, when combined into four-division corps. However, refugees still jammed the roads. To avoid the refugee-jammed roads, the US Marines (who have a small amphibious capability in 1995) were shipped to Pusan to the port of Inchon, near Seoul. Meanwhile, at the DMZ, the ROK's and the US 2nd Division remained in place and entrenched.

With control of the air, the UN allocated almost all squadrons to interdiction. It was a difficult choice. Although massed airstrikes would have blasted selected NKPA units, interdiction affected the Communist supply stockpiles, which determine the readiness of all units. Equally important, the side with more supplies has the privilege of moving second. Though the effects of interdiction take longer, they are far more devastating in the long run than air strikes.

The second turn found the Communists with a bulge punched into the DMZ near Seoul, and their spearheads just two hexes

Conflict: Korea Predicts Tomorrow's War

from the city. The last kilometers would be the toughest, however, since intelligence reports showed strong ROK corps in their path. Though the NKPA still has plenty of firepower, the offensive was already losing a little steam. The problem was not losses (replacements were fairly plentiful) as much as readiness lost due to movement and combat. The only cure was to rest, a luxury the communists could not afford. Also, congestion and stiff movement costs for terrain made it hard to withdraw the first wave and bring up reserves. Fortunately, numerous Communist reserve divisions were on their way from the far north.

Again, amidst a fiery hail of Katyusha rockets, the Communists blasted the ROK defenders, who found their retreat path blocked by units behind them. Nevertheless, the larger UN corps and concentrated artillery had taken a large chunk out of the NKPA first wave.

July 8 - 14 (Turn 3)

SEOUL, Korea (DP) — Despite fierce and desperate fighting, the North Korean offensive appears to be running into trouble. Although cloudy weather again hampered air support, ROK and American troops are still holding the outskirts of Seoul, while the North Koreans seek bridgeheads for a final assault on the capital. However, ROK forces have already mounted several successful counterattacks on NKPA spearheads.



Divine intervention (or its atheistic equivalent) arrived for the Communists in the form of cloudy weather, which hampered UN aircraft. Nonetheless, the North Korea supply level was almost lower than the UN's, whose logistics would soon surpass theirs. Lack of supplies meant the Communists moved first this time. Some of the depleted first-wave corps around Seoul were withdrawn to refit, to be replaced by newly arriving reserve infantry corps. Two corps were already adjacent to the Seoul suburbs, but stood little chance of dislodging the defenders. The plan was to widen the breach in the UN lines and bring more force to bear against the city.

With a chance to see the Communist moves first, the UN player guessed where the Communist blows would fall and reinforced the line. Space was left behind the defenders so they would have room to retreat. The Communists succeeded in dislodging two strong ROK corps, but at a stiff price. A ROK counterattack on the east coast annihilated a North Korean corps, which suffered from lack of local artillery.

July 15 - 21 (Turn 4)

SEOUL, Korea (DP) — The tide is beginning to turn against the North Koreans, whose offensive has bogged down short of Seoul. ROK troops, backed by American artillery, drove back two North Korea mechanized corps north of Seoul. Meanwhile, Communist troops are said to be short of fuel and ammunition as UN aircraft hammer their supply lines by day and night. A wing of B-52s which arrived last week is said to be particularly devastating.

With supplies low, the Communists again moved first and ordered one more multi-corps attack against two ROK corps north of Seoul, but a UN counterattack went in first and destroyed two of the NKPA corps, who could not retreat because of the artillery stacked behind them.

At this point, with supplies ominously low and the weather forecast indicating three more weeks of clear weather and uninterrupted bombing, the Communists elected to come to the peace table.

Analysis

This scenario seems difficult for the Communists to win; unlike 1950, the UN forces, especially the ROK troops, are quite formidable. In hindsight, some artillery should have been left to support the troops on the east coast, who could have acted more aggressively to divert UN troops. On the other hand, there's little of value in that sector, and the terrain would have allowed the UN to hold it with small forces. For its part, the UN might have diverted some air power for airstrikes on the Communist assault troops. The UN had also benefited from the good weather; a couple of storm turns and interdiction would have suffered.

Both sides learned that logistics are the heart of the game. The side with fewer supplies moves first in the initial phase and last in the second phase, so a poorly supplied attacker will find the defender reinforcing his line at crucial points, and plugging breaches before they can be exploited. The lower a unit's readiness, the greater the chance supplying it will permanently drain the stockpile, so unnecessary movement and combat should be avoided. Similarly, sea, rail and air movement are useful but drain supply levels.

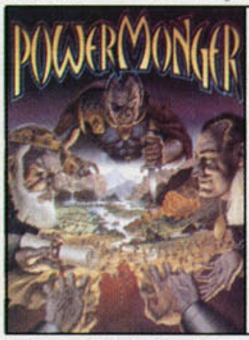
Tactically, the game favors overwhelming force; don't attack without high odds or across unfrozen rivers, which halve attack strength. Units of different nationalities cannot attack together, so different armies should be kept concentrated.

Defensively, the harsh terrain tends to channel advances along the few roads, so a weak roadblock can halt an advance. Roadblocks also give other units time to entrench. Since no combat (other than overrun) is allowed during the second phase, even a weak second line is sufficient to limit a breakthrough. Do not, however, sacrifice depleted units without good cause, because units totally destroyed will come back as completely green outfits.

In 1950 and 1995, the Communists will usually have strength of numbers, while the UN will have firepower (particularly in 1950), air support and amphibious movement. It is how well each side takes advantage of its capabilities that will determine victory in *Conflict:Korea*. **CGW**

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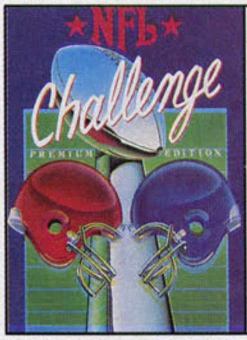
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Review

Apocalyptic Siegers

Mindcraft's Phantastic Simulation of Castle Warfare

by Chris Lombardi

TITLE:	Siege
PRICE:	$59.95
SYSTEM:	IBM
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNERS:	Ali Atabek, Larry Froistad, Patrick Hughes, ans James Thomas
PUBLISHER:	Mindcraft Torrance, CA



Often the best ideas are those that seem most obvious in retrospect. Take the siege as the subject of a wargame, for instance. The siege is a fascinating study in tactics, requiring, in the attacker, shrewd planning, timing, diversion and indirection; and, in the defense, requiring anticipation, a fluid responsiveness and judicious use of resources — all of which is focused into the tight, hot frame of action surrounding a single city or fortress.

One has to wonder, then, why the topic has nary been approached in over 10 years of computer gaming. Could be the lack of computing power until recently, or hesitance in the face of its many and complex aspects, or simply an oversight of the obvious. Regardless, it remained overlooked until **Mindcraft** attempted to get their designing minds around the topic in their first strategy entry, *Siege*.

Siege is a detailed, and nearly complete, simulation of the combat aspects of castle warfare, set within the fantasy universe of **Mindcraft**'s two-part *Magic Candle* role-playing series. The land of Gurtex, as *Magic Candle*'s home is called, is inhabited by the overworked and aging cast of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and is ravaged by the wars wrought within the fantasy genre's favorite dualism. The player assumes either the role of attacker or defender in one of 24 siege scenarios involving one of four beautifully designed and resplendently depicted castles and fortresses.

The player commands up to 400 characters at one time, in groups of up to 50, while warring against the computer's equal complement. The unit mix is impressively varied, with over 50 possible creature types, providing opportunity for combined arms tactics of the broadest sort. Players oversee the action from an omniscient "eye in the sky" which has three levels of focus, from a complete campaign view encompassing the entire playfield, down through an intermediate view, and finally to a magnified view where one can watch individual creatures fight in detail. It is at this most detailed level that one can most appreciate the beautifully rendered VGA graphics and the loving work put into the castle designs. Each character's activities are animated and the detailed view reveals a *very* busy battleground. Hand-to-hand groups hack and slash, wizards send magical fire balls flaming toward the enemy, streams of arrows fly every which way and boulders launched from catapults come crashing into characters with a crunch and a bounce. All of this carefully crafted carnage is continually accompanied by battle cries, screams of dying warriors and the sound of catapult mechanisms lofting their loads. *Siege* captures the sights and sounds of battlefield chaos like no wargame before it.

To command one's host of heroes, orcs, wizards, goblins, etc., one has a robust list of options accessed via a partly iconic, partly menu driven interface. After highlighting a group with a mouse click, one can give basic Goto and Fire-At commands, as well as specific orders to Defend or Attack defined areas, Target a specific enemy group, Reinforce, Replace, or Relieve a friendly group, or Release wounded creatures to return to the hospital for rejuvenation. The mouse interface, when combined with keyboard hot keys, makes the issuing of commands speedy and fluid.

In addition to these basic commands given to the fighting creatures in one's army, there are a number of commands that govern the actions of the busiest group on the field — the engineers. This tireless bunch operates catapults (using both regular and flaming ammunition), fires ballistae (huge crossbow-like machines), pours oil on attackers through the crenels, builds bridges across moats and crevasses, sets up or destroys ladders, erects siege towers and swings battering rams — withstanding the enemies attack all the while. As one can see, *Siege* encompasses nearly every aspect of classic siege combat; except perhaps, miners, the effects of disease and starvation, and the lesser known, perhaps legendary, cattle-pults.

Play passes in 'real-time' with the player able to pause the action at any point. Ten minutes passes at each tick of the game-clock, and a complete siege lasts 20 days. The objective of the attacker is to raise his/her flag on the flagpole at the heart of the defender's castle and keep it there for a full day. The only other victory condition is the case where either side has lost all of its engineers or flags. Casualties are given at the end of each day, expressed as a ratio of friendly to enemy kills (ie. 4 attacker losses to the defenders 1), and if this ratio strongly

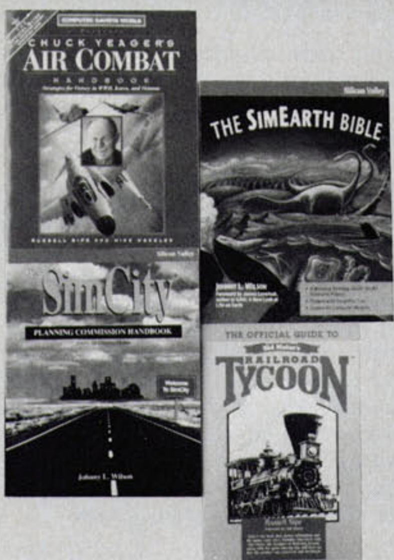


favors one side, then the other side risks desertions from its ranks.

While the victory conditions are straightforward, they are perhaps too much so. One can take a victory by a gnat's eye or soundly trounce the enemy, but both are simply labeled as victories. After a few play sessions, one wants a more sensitive gauge by which to evaluate one's performance — at the very minimum a final tally of casualties. As it stands, one can only keep track of his/her own casualties by tallying the daily

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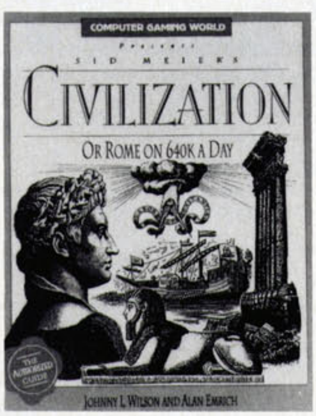
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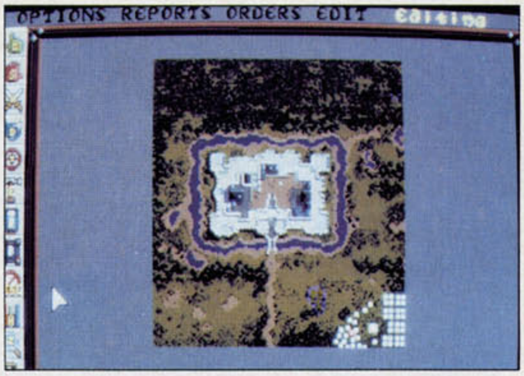
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report, and the enemy's losses can only be guesstimated with the foes/friendly ratio.

The Silicon Sieger

Considering the amount of organization necessary to pull off a successful castle assault, *Siege*'s computer opponent does fairly well. In most situations, it will follow a standard siege procedure; send in the missile troops and catapulters to soften up the player's missile defenses, move in the engineers to create an access to the castle, and quickly follow up with masses of grunt troops. After extended play its approach becomes somewhat predictable and its idiosyncrasies show through. One will find that it likes to create staging grounds where it will mass many troops in a threatening way. Unfortunately, it doesn't use these masses to its advantages. It lacks a killer instinct. I've found that the AI will send two or three strong waves and then its attack peters out. Many times these first waves have left me swaying on the ropes, but the computer hasn't the sense to finish the job. If one plays games for an ego boost, this is acceptable, but if one plays for a challenge, one must resort to the most unbalanced of the 24 scenarios and set the difficulty level to the extreme setting (the difficulty levels determine how many troops one can have on the field at one time).

With so many moving parts on the screen, and with a continually thinking AI, one might wonder about the speed of game play in real-time. On my 386-16, *Siege* runs smoothly with the action continuing at a nice clip (often a bit *too* fast for my wetware), and with the computer taking only brief and sporadic pauses to counter my dazzling strategies. It does quite well for me in this respect, though I've heard that the game may bog down a good deal on a lower-end 286.



Host Your Own Siege Party

Fortunately, one is not limited to the provided 24 scenarios, as *Siege* has a built-in scenario editor. While the castles and surrounding grounds cannot be altered, army compositions can. The 53 creature types can be mixed and matched to one's fancy, and the surrounding environs can be dressed up with odds and ends for a little atmosphere. This certainly gives *Siege* an added element of replayability and depth as experimenting with different 'What if' scenarios can often be more fun than playing those provided. I can imagine a dedicated Tolkien fan going nuts with the editor and recreating the climactic sieges of Minas Tirith or Isengard.

Chinks in the Wall

The initial production run of *Siege* was released with a few bugs that rendered a few of the scenarios unplayable. This was immediately fixed in a second version, so only a few unlucky ones need worry about getting the update.

Despite this initial hiccup, *Siege* is an all-around unique and engaging simulation. The interface and aesthetics are top notch, and the subject is roundly and successfully treated. If the computer AI had more of a cruel streak, the game would be outstanding. In many ways *Siege* is like **QQP**'s *The Perfect General*; a wonderful game system with a mediocre AI and great two-player potential. Modem play would really put *Siege* over the top and I'm happy to pass the rumor of rumors: there is plenty of grumbling at **Mindcraft** indicating that they are considering such a possibility. **CGW**

Zen and the Art of Catapult Maintenance

Tips and Tactics on Mindcraft's *Siege*

by Chris "The Underminer" Lombardi

Many historical sieges were won and lost, not by superior tactics or valorous fighting, but by treachery. While the following article does include tips on superior tactics, it also suggests...well, let's call them, *methods* by which to exploit certain advantages inherent in *Siege*'s mechanics. Enjoy, and may the day go to the human.

Bringing Warriors Together

It's an irritating fact about *Siege*'s mechanics that two clashing groups often do not attack one another full on. More often than not, the two lead creatures of each group will fight one-on-one while the others sit idle. While this can be used to one's advantage when one is out-matched and stalling for reinforcements in a particular battle, it can be a waste of valuable time if one has the advantage. To get more creatures into the fray one must massage the group. This is often simply a matter of moving the group's attack/defense zone a few square, but at other times it is not so easy. In these cases, one can try splitting the group in half, ordering the rear half to attack the enemy's flank.

The Slings and Arrows of Outraged Foes

Missile units can be quite a nuisance for either side of a siege. On the attack, the computer's first move is, invariably, to roll up it's best archer groups and barrage any defended towers. If one is "out-bowed" in this situation, it is often fruitless to fight arrow with arrow. Defending archers do *not* have any defensive advantage, as one might otherwise assume. Often, the best defense is to pull back units out of the enemy's range and focus flaming catapult attacks on the computer's missile staging areas.

A better defensive tack is to form crack hand-to-hand units and station them discreetly outside the walls. When enemy archers approach, they can sally out and make quick work of their weak defense. If one can spare heroes or other elite groups, these make the best anti-missile defense around.

In fact, crack troops are the most important units in the game. These troops not only include heroes, but dreadknights, mazemasters, elementals — basically, any group that combines a fearsome attack with a daunting defense. Judicious and frequent use of these units can mean the difference between Leningrad and Jericho. They should be at the spearhead of a wall assault and at the hot points of a castle defense — but they should be clucked over like a hen to its chicks. One is usually only blessed with a few such troops and the loss of a couple can be a major setback. The key is liberal use of the Release command whenever any units have lost 50% of their health. Injured units can then return to the hospital and rejuvenate. This is a good strategy with *any* group.

While on the subject of injuries, Purple Wizards and Zorlim have a special ability not mentioned in the documentation; namely, they can heal units they are joined with. It's a very powerful skill, as a unit near death can be restored to full health in just a few game moments. A good strategy is to have these healers hang-out around the barracks so that they can join up with battered troops returning from the field. Rather than having valuable troops spend several days in rehab licking their wounds, a healer can do the restorative job in an instant.

One can also have these healing units travel with a group into battle, but this is a much more risky proposition. While a group of crack units with a healer in their midst is an extremely deadly force, one also risks the healer's demise. Their weak defense combined with their tendency to find their way to the front line of a battle, makes them expecially vulnerable. Use healers with care.

Diametrical Engineering

While crack units are key to hand-to-hand victory, efficient use of engineering smarts can make such barbaric methods less of a necessity. There is nothing like a few groups of catapulters with flaming oil for those pesky, hard-to-reach enemy missile units. And there is nothing that will stop an enemy advance quicker than a well placed shot on a critical bridge. Do not discount ballista, either. They shoot 1/3 faster than catapults and are a bit more accurate. Of course, ballista bolts don't bounce like a boulder, and they don't explode, either, but they can still quietly whittle down the enemy very quickly.

The computer AI is especially bad about avoiding such artillery fire. One may notice that the AI sets up 'staging areas' on both attack and defense where it will often pile up dozens of troops. These areas are prime targets for engineer attacks. Three catapult units can inflict severe casualties while the AI, seemingly oblivious to the situation, will leave its troops to be decimated, whereupon it will send more ("Go ahead, kill 'em! We'll make more!"). This is a cheap way to keep the kill ratios up, and thus the enemy desertion rate, high.

By the way, engineers are a primary target for the computer AI. One will find that the moment the computer breeches one's walls, it will send its troops on a bee-line course toward engineer groups. With this in mind, it is often a good strategy to have at least 5 soldiers Escort every engineer group (if you can spare the men, of course) so that when they are attacked, the escorts can hold-off the enemy until reinforcements arrive. This may be a good idea with vulnerable archer groups, as well.

When, on the defense, keeping ladders off of one's walls can mean the difference between solid lines and orcs crapping in one's privy. One may have noticed that an unoccupied soldier standing next to a ladder will occasionally push it down. Normal troops have a 5% chance per turn of figuring out how to do so. Engineers, on the other hand, will instantly destroy any ladder they stand next to. It is a good strategy, then, to have a small group of engineers waiting in the wings for any opportunity to run into the action and do some demolition work. This will keep the enemy's engineers *very* busy.

Alternative Forms of Victory

The primary victory condition of *Siege* is the capture or protection of a flag. But there is another. The game also ends if the enemy no longer has any engineers or flags. Thus, it is possible to win by putting one's energies into concentrated engineerocide. One can create special engineer destruction squads out of one's best troops and wage a relentless assault on any and every engineer that dares step out of the enemy's barracks. With this tact, I've been able to end a siege in 10 days.

And with that tip, we leave the reader to his battered walls or battering rams. Remember, boil oil a full 10 minutes before applying it to an enemy.

For more, and more specific, information on Siege's mechanics, see the tables on page 146. CGW

Siege Charts and Notes

Within Arrow Shot

Missile Weapon	Min Range	Max Range
Short Bow	5	15
Horse Bow	5	15
Light Crossbow	2	15
Long Bow	5	25
Composite Bow	5	20
Heavy Crossbow	2	25
Throwing Axe	1	8
Throwing Spear	1	8
Rock	1	10
Blue Wizard/ Jerrah Attack	2	20

The Heavy Hitters

Item	Damage	Min Range	Max Range
Ballista	200	2	30
Battering Ram	200	1	1
Burning Oil	50	1	1
Catapult	200	5	40
Moat Squid	90	1	1
Vitriol/ Wizard Attack	300	2	20

Catalogue of Creatures

Name	Temper	Damage Rating	Armor Rating	Attack%	Defense%
Arachnid Warrior	4	65	30	55	10
Behemoth Warrior	3	70	45	50	0
Blue Wizard	1	195	30	70	-60
Domug Archer	2	45	5	45	-40
Domug Warrior	1	45	10	35	0
Dreadknight	4	110	137	90	30
Dwarf Axe Thrwer	3	15	45	25	10
Dwarf Elite War.	4	75	60	50	15
Dwarf Engineer	4	40	40	10	10
Dwarf Hero	4	110	102	90	30
Dwarf Sergeant	3	50	45	35	5
Dwarf Warrior	3	40	45	30	15
Elemental of Air	4	95	85	75	45
Elemental of Earth	2	125	125	75	10
Elemental of Fire	4	125	85	75	45
Elemental of Plant	2	95	85	75	10
Elemental of Watr	2	95	85	75	10
Elf Archer	1	35	10	60	-35
Elf Elite Archer	2	50	25	80	-25
Elf Sergeant	2	40	20	65	-30
Gnome Engineer	1	5	10	10	15
Goblin Elite War.	2	35	10	50	20
Goblin Engineer	1	5	10	20	10
Goblin Sergeant	1	20	15	35	15
Goblin Rck Thrwr	1	5	10	10	-30
Goblin Warrior	0	15	10	30	10
Human Archer	2	20	15	30	-40
Human Berserker	3	100	55	35	-20
Human Engineer	1	10	20	20	10
Human Hero	4	110	137	90	30
Human Sergeant	3	35	40	35	15
Human Spear Hurl	2	35	20	20	10
Human Warrior	2	30	35	32	10
Jerrah	1	195	30	70	-60
Minotaur Engineer	4	80	15	30	15
Mintaur Mazemstr	4	120	65	10	30
Minotaur Sergeant	4	110	40	70	15
Minotaur Warrior	4	105	25	60	15
Orc Elite Warrior	2	45	50	45	15
Orc Engineer	2	25	40	15	5
Orc Sergeant	2	25	35	30	10
Orc Spear Hurler	1	35	10	15	10
Orc Warrior	1	20	25	30	5
Purple Wizard	1	195	30	70	20
Skeleton Warrior	4	65	40	50	5
Tekhir Archer	2	55	15	40	-35
Tekhir Elite Archr	3	80	30	60	-25
Tekhir Sergeant	3	70	25	40	-30
Troll Warrior	2	95	35	40	10

NOTES:

-- All numbers, except TEMPER and range are percentages.
-- The DAMAGE and PROTECT factors are a combination of the creature's weapon and armor ratings, and the creature's inherent fighting abilities.
-- The TEMPER factor is a general rating of a creature's courage. The higher the rating, the more casualties a group of creatures will take before retreating.
-- Spiders and Air Elementals can climb walls unaided.
-- All creatures have 15 hit points.
-- A creature will attack once per animation frame with a full 'fatigue bar'. This drops to once per three animation frames as the 'fatigue bar' reaches its lowest point.

Using The Numbers

When two creatures fight, a hit is determined by a random number from 1 - 100. If the attacker's random number is less than its ATTACK% minus the defender's DEFENSE% then the attacker hits. For example, if a Dwarf Warrior (Attack% = 30) attacks an Orc Warrior (Defense% = 5) then the Dwarf has a (30 - 5) = 25% chance to hit. Whereas the Orc's counterattack against the Dwarf would have a (30 - 15) = 15% chance of landing true.

Damage is assessed by subtracting the defender's Armor Rating from the attacker's Damage Rating. For example, if the Dwarf hit the Orc, then the Orc would lose (40 - 25) = 15% of its 15 hit points.

A hit always does an automatic 1% of damage, even if the equation produces a negative number.

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Advanced Strategy for *The Lost Admiral*

by Tim Carter

One reason that *The Lost Admiral* (*TLA*) is one of my favorite games is that it really does live up to that all-too-elusive goal: easy to learn, but difficult to master. Despite its simplicity, *TLA* lends itself to some very sophisticated strategy. This article is designed to help those players who have got the mechanics of the game down and are now working on getting beyond the middle ranges (5-7) of difficulty.

To Everything There Is A Sea Zone (Operational Planning)

Before creating a navy, players should have a good idea of what their overall strategy will be. Winning consistently requires the creation of a force which meets the specific needs of a given scenario or campaign.

To better organize operational planning, it is useful to divide the map into a series of zones. Most of the maps naturally suggest zones due to geography. This is more difficult for map #9, in which case players should conceptualize zones based on groups of cities. What is required, at this point, is a set of operational plans for each zone which, when combined, add up to an integrated strategy for winning the scenario as a whole.

A Sea Zone to Raid

For instance, some zones should be designated as raiding zones. A raiding zone is one where either the player is too weak or the potential payoff too small to warrant a larger effort to control the area. The goal for that zone, then, becomes sea denial. In this case the most effective forces will be small garrisons along with some inexpensive raiding forces to keep the enemy busy. If used properly, a small force of light units (destroyers, PT boats and submarines) can keep a much larger enemy force tied up. Even if raiding units are wiped out, they can have a tremendous impact on the total points that the enemy can gain from the zone if they can manage to occupy enemy cities or sink enemy transports before their demise.

A Sea Zone to Contest

Often, players will not have enough forces to dominate multiple zones, but will be unwilling to write off important areas to raiding forces only. In such cases, planning to contest a given zone is usually a good idea. The objective in a contested zone is to be able to deal with raiding forces, protect friendly ports and give an enemy fleet a difficult time on the open ocean.



Contesting tactics will set the scene for the endgame, particularly in longer scenarios. In many situations it is a good idea to plan to contest a central area at the start of a scenario, then rely on reinforcements (either in the form of forces which have been initially deployed elsewhere or new builds from a conveniently located 200 point port) to control it by the end of the game.

The forces required for contesting a zone depend on the anticipated strength of the enemy fleet. A good rule of thumb is to determine how key ports will be garrisoned and then, construct a fleet capable of dealing with threats to the garrison. For instance, if an important port can be covered by a coastal gun emplacement, then less ASW forces will be needed, but submarine forces should be optimized. In such a situation submarines are less of a threat than heavy units. Furthermore, it is easier to reinforce with ASW units than heavy units due to their speed and low costs.

A Sea Zone to Control

In most scenarios sufficient forces will be available to provide players with a good shot at controlling at least one sea zone. Controlled sea zones provide guaranteed points; players should be careful to have enough transports and AT boats to occupy all of the ports in a controlled zone.

Geography is an important factor in deciding where to try to establish control. If a zone can be easily isolated, an attempt can be made to gain control with a relatively small force. In general, there are two key geographical factors to consider when deciding how to classify zones. First, what is the value of the cities within the zone? There is no point committing a large fleet to control an area with little payoff in terms of points. Second, how

does the controlled zone relate to the zones around it? If control can be established early, as is often the case, can the forces in the zone easily reinforce another zone?

Note that control does not necessarily require a huge amount of force, it simply requires a relative advantage over the opposition. However, in most scenarios, control of a key area will require a major part of the fleet. The crucial question is: how much is enough?

By thinking in terms of raiding, contested, and controlled sea zones, players should be able to develop a framework for constructing initial forces and initial strategies. Keep in mind the points payoff for each map. Some zones may require a massive effort simply because they contain the majority of cities and therefore points.



And A Time to Stay Out of Davy Jones' Locker (Tactics)

Good strategic planning alone will not win games on its own. The second half of becoming an admiral is a solid understanding of the tactics necessary to succeed in battle. Because combat results are fixed, detailed planning is possible.

Tactics must be linked to strategy. If the map has been divided into zones, then steps must be taken to reflect this. For instance, if a zone has been surrendered an attempt should be made to isolate it from areas which contain friendly ports. Gun emplacements are particularly useful for this task. Often, the areas that allow gun emplacements will be situated in a way which naturally suggests how to divide the map.

A Time to Attack

The nature of the combat system in *The Lost Admiral* gives a definite advantage to the player with the better intelligence. The only cost-effective way of gaining information on enemy forces throughout a scenario is through the use of aircraft carriers. The ability of these units to see two squares in every direction is the key to winning large scale engagements in *TLA*.

Obviously, the key match-ups in a large engagement are submarines on battleships, destroyers and PT boats on submarines, and heavy units against destroyers and PT boats. Unless these match-ups are obtained, players will be faced with a grinding war of attrition which will usually result in the majority of both fleets making a swift journey to the bottom.

Getting the right match-ups is a rather obvious recommendation and one that even novice players will pick up on almost immediately. The key to winning is not only to get favorable match-ups but to prevent the opposition from doing so. While it will rarely be possible to constantly get the *perfect* match-up, the key to victory is ensuring that one's enemy is constantly forced to accept sub-optimal matche-ups. Positioning is the key to accomplishing this.

An example of this tactic is the use of

envelopment. The logic behind enveloping tactics is simple: since each unit has an advantage against some opponents, but not others, it makes sense to attempt to match up as many friendly units as possible on the same turn. This will prevent the opposition from responding in kind on his turn. This is particularly crucial when using fragile forces such as submarines.

If an attack can simultaneously strike both forward and rear echelons of an enemy force, it may be possible to match submarines against heavy units while also engaging enemy destroyers. At the very least, one should attempt to block access for reinforcing enemy units.

A risky, but useful, tactic is to discover the deployment of the enemy fleet and then place one's own forces to obtain advantageous match-ups during the opposition's turn. For instance, if the enemy is leading his fleet with battleships, place submarines in their expected path. This can give one a "double turn" and lead to early destruction of an enemy fleet. Of course, it can also lead to disaster if enemy movements do not unfold as expected.

It is important to constantly consider what one's own fleet will look like at the end of the combat resolution phase. Getting good match-ups is not enough if it merely leads to an exposed and vulnerable fleet that can be easily attacked by following enemy forces. The mark of a skilled admiral is the ability to damage the enemy without suffering commensurate damage in return.

Raiding

Raiding can have two forms, both of which aim to destroy enemy transports, harass his forces and prevent him from holding cities. Raids can be launched directly against enemy held ports in order to sink transports and deny the enemy victory points. Light forces can also be used to skirt enemy fleets and attempt to destroy transports that are at sea but which are lightly escorted.

Raiders are usually comprised of destroyers, PT boats and submarines. Since it is difficult to anticipate in advance the forces that the computer is likely to use to garrison ports, the mix of raiding forces is really a matter of personal preference.

If large enemy forces are anticipated, submarines may be the most effective unit. Their stealthy capabilities can more than compensate for the additional cost. Remember that ports can "see" two squares into the ocean. If submarines are being used as raiders they should submerge while out of sight of target ports. Otherwise they may find heavy units coming out to meet them while they are still on the surface.

Keep an eye on the build screens. In scenarios where reinforcements are important, try to identify those cities which are crucial to the opposition's ship building industry. Often a single city acts as a bottleneck by providing most of a crucial resource. By concentrating raids on bottleneck cities, a kind of economic warfare can be waged which will often pay important dividends in the endgame.

Occasionally, it is useful to have AT boats or transports accompany raiders. After all, if the garrison of an enemy city is going to be destroyed, why not replace it with a friendly one? The decision to send transports will depend largely on available resources as well as the nature of expected enemy forces. If the enemy is weak this will be highly profitable.

Often the computer (and human) opponent will only use light forces to garrison cities. If a city is considered crucial (i.e., a 200 point build city or a 500 point enemy home port), then including a heavy unit in the raiding force is not a bad idea. In such cases, cruisers are an excellent idea.

Turn, Turn, Turn

Following these principles should provide for more frequent success in *The Lost Admiral* scenarios. Of course, as good as the artificial admiral is, it may find a way to supersede even these tactical considerations. CGW



THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN 2

"A" Musings From Deadly Games

by Alan Emrich

TITLE:	The Battle of Britain 2
SYSTEM:	Macintosh
PRICE:	$54.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Rene Vidmer
PUBLISHER:	Deadly Games 122 Penns Grant Drive Morrisville, PA 19067 (215) 295-2284

"Upon this battle [of Britain] depends the survival of Christian civilization. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war.... Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say: 'This was their finest hour.'"

When France surrendered less than six weeks after the Germans rolled over her eastern border on May 15, 1940 — England stood alone, and defiant. The preceding quotation from Winston Churchill's famous speech to the House of Commons set the stage for the great aerial campaign launched by Hitler's Luftwaffe against the island nation of Great Britain. The hinge of destiny turned upon this battle.

This page in the annals of military history was made for wargaming. Many flight simulators, the most notable being *Their Finest Hour* from **LucasArts**, already exist. Now, however, there is a simple, intriguing strategy game from **Deadly Games**.

The Battle of Britain 2 is compactly packaged in a 6-inch square by half-inch deep box, which, frankly, I almost confused with a CD-ROM product by "judging a game by its box" before opening it. It works with all Macs (Plus through IIfx) and is, mercifully, System 7 compatible. The three disks take up a good 5 MB on the hard drive, but both black and white and 16-color versions of the game can be played.



Eagle Day

Battle of Britain 2 takes players out of the cockpit and places them 50 feet below ground in the war room at Uxbridge. As best visualized in the film *The Battle of Britain*, one must picture that war room with the giant tote board on the wall and a huge table-map of south-east England. Servicewomen would maneuver models of both side's air forces on the map grid while the air marshals looked down from the balconies above it to constantly visualize the ever changing situation. From a computer recreation of this "vantage point," reports arrive to the player, who must order the squadrons of the 11th Group RAF to defend their island.

On August 10, 1940, the Germans launched their great air offensive, code named "Eagle Day." A map of the south-east portion of England is displayed as the main screen graphic. It is divided into seven air zones, each of which is centered around a major air base. Each day begins by checking on the button for the ULTRA (secret intelligence) reports of expected enemy activity. They guesstimate either light, medium or heavy activity from the Luftwaffe. With that, fighter groups are put on patrol and placed somewhere in their operational radius, hopefully protecting the right targets.

Once initial assets are airborne for the day, clicking on the clock advances time, followed by a teletype report. This could read anything from "all's quiet" through an early warning from one's radar stations to an announcement that a given target is presently being bombed. The player's careful reaction to these snippets of information and reports represents the

key element of decision making in *The Battle of Britain 2*. Fighter squadron status is shown on reproductions of the tote boards used by the RAF (Royal Air Force) at that time. Actually, the "feel" of the period is excellently portrayed in *The Battle of Britain 2*.

"They'll Never Bomb This Place…"

"…or my name is Meyer," said Herman Goering when asked about the saftey of Berlin from British attack during the height of the Battle of Britain. When the British succeeded in conducting a daring, sneak raid by night over the German capitol, Hitler issued a new directive. Even as the British were desperately losing the battle because the Germans were pounding their radar stations and air fields in preparation for an invasion, Hitler wanted to answer back for the raid on Berlin with a "terror bombing" campaign of London, claiming that for every hundred kilograms of bombs dropped on Berlin, he would answer with a thousand on London. Known as "the Blitz," it was a great military blunder and one which the game's AI may, in fact, recreate during play.

Although the documentation in *The Battle of Britain 2* is superb, it is also remarkably brief. In fact, I read it from cover-to-cover in less than 10 minutes and felt very familiar with the game by the end of a half-hour with it. Frankly, the game is easier to learn than *Chess* and, in many ways, more absorbing.



In addition to the documentation, there is a reprint, in booklet form, of the *Royal Air Force War Manual (Part 1. Operations)*. Created by the Air Ministry in August 1940, it is not only a page out of history, but a mini-manifesto for smart play. Each battle ends with a report, and each day is capped off by reading the headlines in an attractive looking graphic of the *London Daily Mail*. The campaign lasts a month, punctuated by respites provided by rainy weather. Simple and charming, the "command perspective" gave this game tremendous playability.

Playing *The Battle of Britain* has me very much inspired and wanting to see the movie of the same name again. It is easy to see this game as an almost sterotypical piece of Macintosh entertainment software: compact, absorbing and full of replay value. In the words of Winston Chruchill: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." Don't miss out on *The Battle of Britain 2* if you want a gaming distraction that is, at once, enjoyable, pleasant, easily learned, historical and "lite." CGW



Review

If Disney Met Howard Hughes



The Ultimate Simulator

by Mike "Moondawg" Weksler



David "Eagle" Kinney sits in the front seat of the F-4 Phantom.

If Walt Disney and Howard Hughes had been able to get together and form a Virtual Reality entertainment facility, the end result would no doubt be similar to *Fightertown*. *Fightertown*, nestled in an industrial complex next to the El Toro Marine Air Station, is the world's first civilian air combat simulator fighter wing and the brainchild of three former aerospace engineers with previous experience in designing military simulators.

The World Is Virtual, The Cockpits Are For Real

The cockpits are designed and/or refurbished from military aircraft simulators by Kinney Aero, which also designed the flight models. The cockpits include: an F-111 Aardvark, an F-104 Starfighter, an F-4 Phantom, which will be operational as this issue goes to press, and an F-16 Falcon, due to arrive at *Fightertown* this Fall. The cockpits are linked via a proprietary network that is called *Fighternet*, which has the ability to eventually link up to 40 cockpits.



The F-104 Starfighter cockpit awaits its next pilot.

The F-111 and the F-4 are both two-seaters and seeing one's buddy in full flight regalia: flight suit, helmet, and harness, when flying a combat mission is nothing short of a mind-blower in the suspension-of-disbelief department. Air crews are even "hot-miked" to each other so they may communicate between themselves on a closed frequency.

Each cockpit is positioned in front of its own 10' by 12' screen. The virtual landscape is projected onto this screen with a one-thousand line resolution. HUD (Head-Up Display) information (altitude, airspeed, and heading) is projected onto this screen as well. The Head-Down display is located in front of each seat and provides information relating to one's aircraft and flight status. Also displayed are three Multi-Function displays (MFDs) which cycle between weapons status and checklists, air-to-air and air-to-ground radar, and navigation info and the ILS system. HUD symbology in combat is limited to an LCOS (lead computing optical sight) gunsight and a TD (target designator) box which frames a target locked up on the radar.

The avionics are fairly simple to allow for "off-the-street" enthusiasts to climb in and acclimate rapidly. A jet air combat simulation jock will catch on immediately. For example, there is no "boresight" or through-the-nose view radar, only a top down view similar to *Falcon 3.0*'s SAD radar mode. Cockpits have several of their switches slaved to the simulation so that one pulls the real gear lever or flap lever to activate the respective equipment in the simulation. Most new pilots will be "elbows and thumbs" for the first few flights until their level of situational awareness increases to handle all of the inputs from the simulation and the various controllers and other air crews on the radio.

Sierra Hotel

Combat missions include both air-to-air and air-to-ground with the former encompassing a modem air combat simulation fanatic's dream — two full-blown cockpits linked head-to-head for the ultimate in air combat action. Additionally, missions may include providing a CAP (combat air patrol) for a strike force scrambling to intercept inbound bandits. Weapons include an older Aim-9 Sidewinder variant requiring a rear aspect shot, an A-120 AMRAAM type missile which is long-range "fire and forget," and a 20mm cannon.

Strike missions are currently carried out with guns-only passes but Mk82HD Snakeyes should be implemented soon. Additionally, there are a variety of recon missions available. Missions may be flown in weather ranging from clear to less than one mile visibility either during the daytime or at night.

The virtual world is full of air fields, islands, cities, a carrier, and a hostile city which boasts an enemy air base replete with enough SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) and AAA (anti-aircraft artillery) to humble even the most able of simulator jocks. A flight past the nuclear plant and up the canyon on Catsclam is a must see.

Go on down... they'll throw a MiG on the 'barbie for ya!

Short of full immersion virtual reality, *Fightertown* is the hottest thing around. *Fightertown USA* is located at 8 Hammond Road, in Irvine, CA 92718. Their number is (714) 855-8802. It is closed on Mondays. CGW

Explore Strange Lands, Meet Exotic Beings, Confront Malevolent Creatures and Kill Them.

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THE ISLAND OF KESMAI



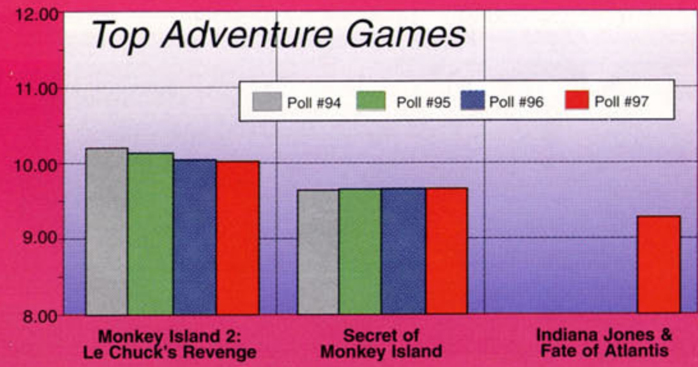
In *Galaxy II* you'll embark on an intergalactic campaign. Beware, play is fast, realtime, and loaded with unpredictability as other conniving live players try to outwit you. Natural disasters, disease and starvation abound to further thwart your plans for claiming and presiding over your planet.

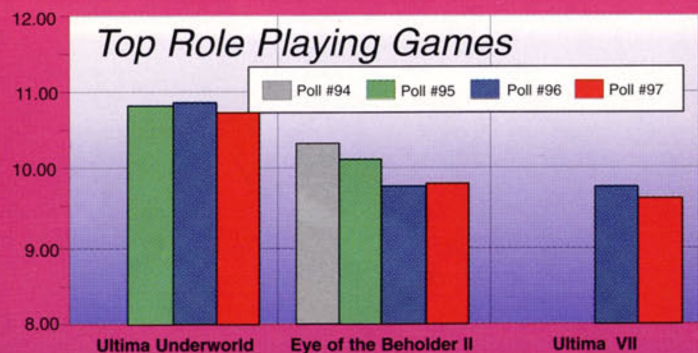
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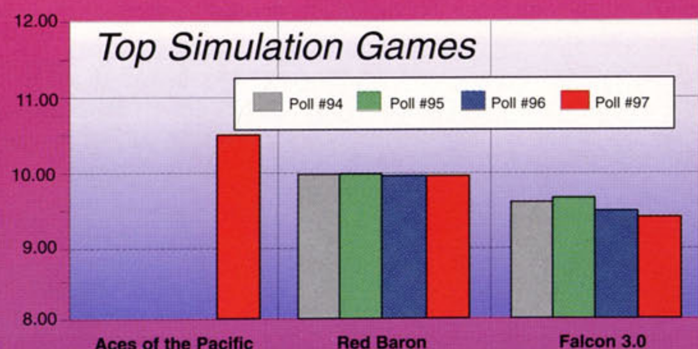
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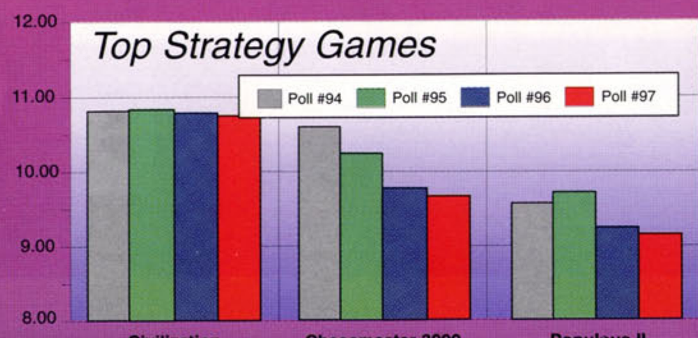
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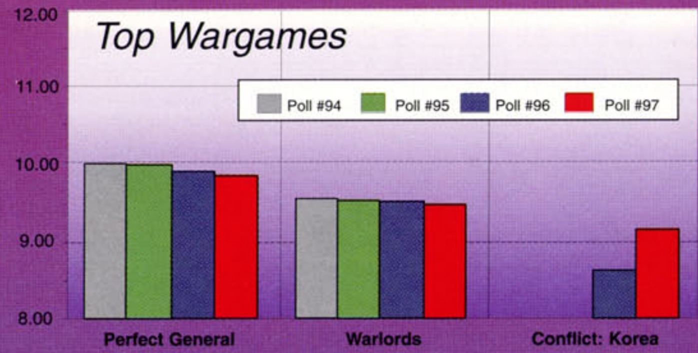


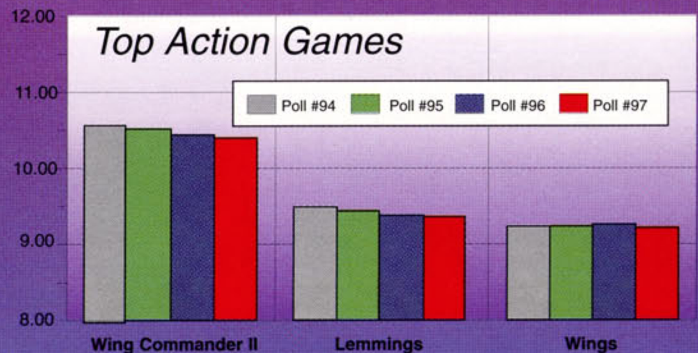


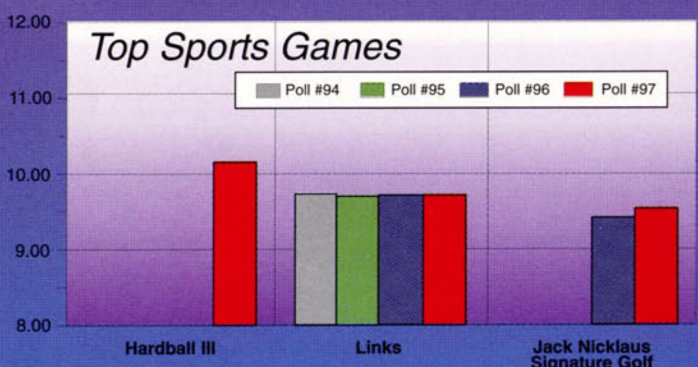


Top 100 Games

No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
1	Civilization	MicroProse	ST	10.75
2	Ultima Underworld	Origin	RP	10.71
3	Aces of the Pacific	Dynamix	SI	10.50
4	Wing Commander II	Origin	AC	10.41
5	Hardball III	Accolade	SP	10.15
6	Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's Revenge	LucasArts	AD	10.03
7	Red Baron	Dynamix	SI	9.95
8	The Perfect General	QQP	WG	9.84
9	Eye of the Beholder II	SSI	RP	9.76
10	Links	Access	SP	9.70
11	Chessmaster 3000	Software Toolworks	ST	9.68
12	The Secret of Monkey Island	LucasArts	AD	9.67
13	Ultima VII	Origin	RP	9.59
14	Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf	Accolade	SP	9.52
15	Warlords	SSG	WG,ST	9.50
	Might & Magic III	New World Computing	RP	9.50
17	Falcon 3.0	Spectrum HoloByte	SI	9.40
18	Lemmings	Psygnosis	AC	9.39
	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe	LucasArts	SI	9.39
20	Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis	LucasArts	AD	9.29
21	Wings	Cinemaware	AC	9.20
22	Conflict: Korea	SSI	WG	9.17
23	Second Front	SSI	WG	9.16
24	Populous II	Electronic Arts	ST	9.14
25	Eye of the Beholder	SSI	RP	9.13
26	Gunship 2000	MicroProse	SI	9.12
27	Quest for Glory II	Sierra	AD,RP	9.11
	The Castle of Dr. Brain	Sierra	AD	9.11
29	Silent Service II	MicroProse	SI	9.08
30	Solitaire's Journey	QQP	ST	9.07
31	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	SI	9.06
32	Bane of the Cosmic Forge	Sir-Tech	RP	9.05
	Battlehawks 1942	LucasArts	AC,SI	9.05
34	Red Storm Rising	MicroProse	SI	9.04
35	Conquests of the Longbow	Sierra	AD	9.03
36	Ultima V	Origin	RP	9.00
	Quest for Glory	Sierra	RP	9.00
38	The Lost Admiral	QQP	ST	8.99
39	Space Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.98
	Western Front	SSI	WG	8.98
41	Space Quest III	Sierra	AD	8.97
	Police Quest 3	Sierra	AD	8.97
43	The Adventures of Willy Beamish	Dynamix	AD	8.96
44	Mech Warrior	Activision	ST,SI	8.95
	Wasteland	Electronic Arts	RP	8.95
46	Sword of Aragon	SSI	WG,ST	8.94
	Pools of Darkness	SSI	RP	8.94
48	Overrun	SSI	WG	8.93
	F-117A	MicroProse	SI	8.93
50	Oh, No! More Lemmings	Psygnosis	AC	8.92







51	Falcon	Spectrum HoloByte	SI	8.90
52	Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf	Accolade	ST	8.89
	Rise of the Dragon	Dynamix	AD	8.89
	Martian Memorandum	Access	AD	8.89
55	NFL Challenge	XOR Corporation	ST	8.87
	4-D Boxing	Electronic Arts	SP	8.87
57	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms	Koei	ST,RP	8.86
58	Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	SP	8.85
59	Populous	Electronic Arts	ST	8.84
60	Elvira	Accolade	RP	8.82
	Super Tetris	Spectrum HoloByte	AC,ST	8.82
62	Command HQ	MicroPlay	WG,ST	8.81
	Might & Magic II	New World Computing	RP	8.81
	Rules of Engagement	Mindcraft	ST	8.81
	Tracon	Wesson International	ST	8.81
	V for Victory: Utah Beach	Three-Sixty Pacific	WG	8.81
67	The Magic Candle	Mindcraft	RP	8.80
68	Gateway to the Savage Frontier	SSI	RP	8.79
69	Hoyle Book of Games, Vol. 3	Sierra	ST	8.78
70	Bard's Tale III	Electronic Arts	RP	8.77
71	Heart of China	Dynamix	AD	8.75
	Out of this World	Interplay	AC	8.75
73	Powermonger	Electronic Arts	ST	8.74
74	Covert Action	MicroProse	AC,AD	8.73
75	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	WG	8.72
	Battlechess	Interplay	ST	8.72
77	Breach 2	Omnitrend	ST,RP	8.71
	Starflight II	Electronic Arts	RP	8.71
79	Neuromancer	Interplay	AD	8.70
	PGA Tour Golf	Electronic Arts	SP	8.70
81	F-15 Strike Eagle II	MicroProse	SI	8.69
82	Action Stations	RAW Entertainment	WG	8.68
83	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	WG	8.67
	Curse of the Azure Bonds	SSI	RP	8.67
85	NFL Pro League Football	Micro Sports	SP	8.66
86	Indiana Jones/Graphic Adv.	LucasArts	AD	8.65
	Ballistyx	Psygnosis	AC	8.65
88	Armada 2525	Interstel	ST	8.63
89	Wayne Gretzky Hockey	Bethesda Softworks	AC,ST	8.62
	Megafortress	Three-Sixty Pacific	SI,ST	8.62
91	Pool of Radiance	SSI	RP	8.61
92	Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball	SSI	SP	8.60
93	King's Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.59
	Wide World of Sports Boxing	Data East	SP	8.59
95	Buck Rogers	SSI	RP	8.57
	Star Trek: 25th Aniversary	Interplay	AD	8.57
	Carrier Strike	SSI	WG	8.57
98	Chessmaster 2100	Software Toolworks	ST	8.56
	Conan the Cimmerian	Virgin	AC,RP	8.56
100	Genghis Khan	Koei	ST,RP	8.54

The Computer Gaming World Poll

A monthly survey of the readers of Computer Gaming World Magazine.

Prepared by Golden Data Services.

Bestseller List

PC Research Hits List of Top-Selling Software June, 1992

PC Games (MS-DOS)

Rank Title and Source

1. Aces of the Pacific (Sierra On-Line)
2. Hardball III (Accolade)
3. A-Train (Maxis)
4. Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis (Lucasfilm Games)
5. Dark Queen of Krynn (Electronic Arts)
6. Civilization (MicroProse)
7. Gateway (Accolade)
8. Sim City (Maxis)
9. F117A Stealth Fighter 2.0 (MicroProse)
10. Ultima VII (Origin)
11. Powermonger (Electronic Arts)
12. Monopoly (Virgin Games)
13. Dark Seed (Merit)
14. Star Trek 25th Anniversary (Interplay)
15. Gunship 2000 (MicroProse)
16. Grand Prix Circuit (Accolade)
17. Lost Treasures of Infocom (Activision)
18. Dagger of Amon Ra: Laura Bow II (Sierra On-Line)
19. Wing Commander II/Special Operations 2 (Origin)
20. Police Quest III (Sierra On-Line)

Amiga Games

Rank Title and Source

1. Out of this World (Interplay)
2. 688 Attack Sub (Electronic Arts)
3. Leisure Suit Larry V (Sierra On-Line)
4. AD&D Eye of the Beholder (SSI)
5. Black Crypt (Electronic Arts)

Macintosh Games

Rank Title and Source

1. Manhunter San Francisco (Sierra On-Line)
2. Sim City (Maxis)
3. Flight Simulator (Microsoft)
4. Lost Treasures of Infocom (Activision)
5. Sim Ant (Maxis)

Home Education (MS-DOS)

Rank Title

1. Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego (Broderbund)
2. Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing (Software Toolworks)
3. Where in the U.S.A. is Carmen Sandiego (Broderbund)
4. New Math Blaster Plus (Davidson)
5. Playroom (Broderbund)
6. Algeblaster Plus (Davidson)
7. Reader Rabbit 1 (Learning Company)
8. Reader Rabbit 2 (Learning Company)
9. Body Works (Automap)
10. Oregon Trail (MECC)

This list is based on units solf by Software Etc., Babbages, Waldensoftware and Electronics Boutique. For more information, please contact PC Research at (703) 435-1025.

What You Have Been Playing Lately ...

The Feedback Forum of Reader Responses

Beginning in issue #93 we added a new question to our CGW Poll cards. Along with the list of games to be rated (which is the basis for the Top 100 Chart and serves as a lasting indication of which games are quality works and which are not) we also wanted to know which games have grabbed you, which are hot, which keep you up into the wee hours, which have become the foundation of your spouse's divorce filing. The following list was composed by adding up the number of times a game was written into the blank line provided on the CGW Poll card and putting them into rank. Since the data for this column will not be accumulated over time, this list will be more dynamic and will serve as a good indication of just which games have been responsible for the greatest loss in GHP (gross human productivity).

Feedback from CGW #97, August 1992:

1. Aces of the Pacific (Dynamix)
2. Ultima 7 (Origin)
3. Civilization (MicroProse)
4. Ultima Underworld (Origin)
5. Global Conquest (Microplay)
6. The Perfect General (QQP)
7. Carrier Strike (SSI)
8. Hardball III (Accolade)
9. Monkey Island 2 (LucasArts)
10. Indy & the Fate of Atlantis (LucasArts)

Interesting responses of the month:

"Everyday."
Omni-play Horseracing
Autoduel
A-Train (me), Civilization (wife)
IBM
Multi-Dimensional Thief
Sierra On-Line

Quotes of note:

"Why is *Railroad Tycoon* not listed in the Top 100 — Incredible.
- William H. Zielke. Chattanooga, TN

[Ed - Incredible, indeed. That's why we put it in the Hall of Fame. Check the facing page.]

"I love *Civilization* because it's both a fun toolkit and game, and *Perfect General* because it's simple yet very challenging head to head."
- Dan Goswick. Reston, VA

"Its endless dialogue, useless NPCs and slow playing speed prevented me from enjoying *Ultima VII.* If you took the graphics and realism from *Ultima VII* and put it in the game and relative simplicity of *Ultima VI,* we could have a perfect CRPG."
- Kenneth Schwartz. Brooklyn, NY

"*Ultima VII* was the absolute best game I have ever played. It was the most enjoyable and engrossing game I have ever encountered. When Origin says, 'We create worlds', I believe it!"
- Glen DeBiasa. Hamburg, NJ

"Playing the A.I. in *Perfect General* is exciting. But playing by modem is, well... WAR!"
- Dan Bradley. Little Compton, RI

"Hey! Is the Emperor level of *Civilization* winable? I can't do it, even tho' I play a mean King game."
- Anonymous Civaholic

[Ed - Well, as Bugs Bunny would say, "dis calls for a little stragedy." We could plug Alan Emrich and Johnny Wilson's excellent *Civilization* strategy book here, but that would be wrong.] CGW

Hall of Fame

The games in *Computer Gaming World's Hall of Fame* have been highly rated by our readers over time. They have been rated for their impact on the computer gaming hobby during their peak period of influence and acceptance by our readership. Note that the dates listed for each game are the copyright dates and may precede the actual release dates. Specific formats listed are those which *CGW* has in its possession. Each month, we will publish a brief description of some of these classic games as part of this listing.

***The Bard's Tale* (Electronic Arts,** 1985) Many Formats

***Chessmaster* (Software Toolworks,** 1986) Many Formats

***Dungeon Master* (FTL Software,** 1987) Amiga, Atari ST, IBM

***Earl Weaver Baseball* (Electronic Arts,** 1986) Amiga, IBM, Macintosh

***Empire* (Interstel,** 1978) Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM

***F-19 Stealth Fighter* (MicroProse,** 1988) IBM

***Gettysburg: The Turning Point* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.,** 1986) Amiga, Apple, C-64, IBM

***Gunship* (MicroProse,** 1989) Amiga, C-64, IBM

***Harpoon* (Three-Sixty Pacific,** 1989) Amiga, IBM, Macintosh

***Kampfgruppe* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.,** 1985) Many formats

***King's Quest V* (Sierra,** 1990) IBM

***M-1 Tank Platoon* (MicroProse,** 1989) Amiga, IBM

***Mech Brigade* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.,** 1985) Many formats

***Might & Magic* (New World Computing,** 1986) Apple, C-64, IBM

Might & Magic caught the fancy of role-players everywhere because it offered a new look (i.e. the walls in various mazes had a distinctive three-dimensional look as one explored the dungeons), a prolific amount of combat encounters and one of the largest maps to that point in a CRPG. Designed by a gamer, Jon van Canegham, for gamers, the emphasis of the series has always been on tactical success to reach a strategic goal.

***M.U.L.E.* (Electronic Arts,** 1983) Atari 8-bit, C-64

Asked to create a *Cartels & Cutthroats* clone, Dan Bunten decided to throw away the template. Bunten merged elements of economics (supply/demand manipulation, production/storage, etc.) into a four-player exploration/strategy game in which the players purchase robotic "mules" in order to explore/exploit the planetary landscape of fictitious planets. *M.U.L.E.* was probably the landmark multi-player game for input without modem assistance. The interface was both straightforward and humorous. The play was exceedingly well-balanced.

***Pirates* (MicroProse,** 1987) Many formats

Sid Meier's *Pirates* is another game that breaks traditional game design templates. The game features exploration, strategy, resource management, tactical combat and action-resolved combat, all wrapped up in a delightful role-playing package. It can probably stand as the most successful hybrid game in computer game history.

***Railroad Tycoon* (MicroProse,** 1990) Amiga, IBM, Macintosh

Sid Meier holds the record for having the most titles in the CGW Hall of Fame. One of the reasons for this is because he refuses to be stuck in a game design rut. Instead, he looks for new subjects and new approaches. Inspired by a combination of admiration for *SimCity* and a love of model railroading, *Railroad Tycoon* successfully blends elements of a "software toy" (railroad building) and a game of economic competition (rate wars, stock manipulation) into something new and vital.

***SimCity* (Maxis,** 1987) Many formats

Rejected by a software publisher because there was not enough game to it, *SimCity* established the genre known as "software toys." In *SimCity*, Will Wright followed his delight at creating dynamic urban terrain and transformed that joyful sense of discovery into a product that reflects reality, allows creativity, provides performance evaluation and entertains everyone.

***Starflight* (Electronic Arts,** 1986) Amiga, C-64, IBM, Sega

In addition to the elements of role-playing, exploration and economic management, *Starflight* was the first CRPG that required players to use a diplomatic strategy. The game featured some very alien races conceived in the very imaginative mind of Greg Johnson. Such rich NPCs offered additional suspension of disbelief beyond the fractal-generated planets that, themselves, provided a depth of reality to exploring the *Starflight* universe.

***Their Finest Hour* (Lucasfilm,** 1989) Amiga, Atari ST, IBM

***Ultima III* (Origin,** 1983) Apple, Atari ST, C-64, IBM

***Ultima IV* (Origin,** 1985) Amiga, Apple, Atari ST, IBM

***Ultima VI* (Origin,** 1990) Amiga, IBM

***War in Russia* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.,** 1984) Apple

***Wing Commander* (Origin,** 1991) IBM, Sega

***Wizardry* (Sir-Tech Software,** 1981) Many formats CGW

Advertisers List

It's Only A Game!



by Johnny L. Wilson

State of the Magazine: Sometimes, we get letters telling us to lighten up. After all, goes the rationale, these are *only* games. In addition, some of our readers are absolutely offended at the idea that we take seriously the moral, philosophical underpinnning of computer games and actually believe that these entertainment experiences have applications for community building, cultural understanding and individual edification in *addition* to being fun.

So, it was with great interest that I read a lengthy book review in the *Los Angeles Times* which covered a new anthology of the baseball stories of Ring Lardner. The review began by citing a comment by F. Scott Fitzgerald which had virtually accused Lardner of wasting his time and talent by writing about "a boy's game, with no more possibilities in it than a boy could master, ... "

It should be fairly easy to imagine how this disparaging remark from one of my all-time favorite authors would have hit me like a plague in *Global Conquest* (which knocks every unit in a burb down to one strength point). Fortunately, I did not stop reading the review at that point. After all, I love to read both Fitzgerald and Lardner, often finding myself quoting the title of "You know me, Al!" whenever I mess up (*You Know Me Al* being a series of letters from a nearly washed-up minor leaguer to an earlier teammate who had already seen the light).

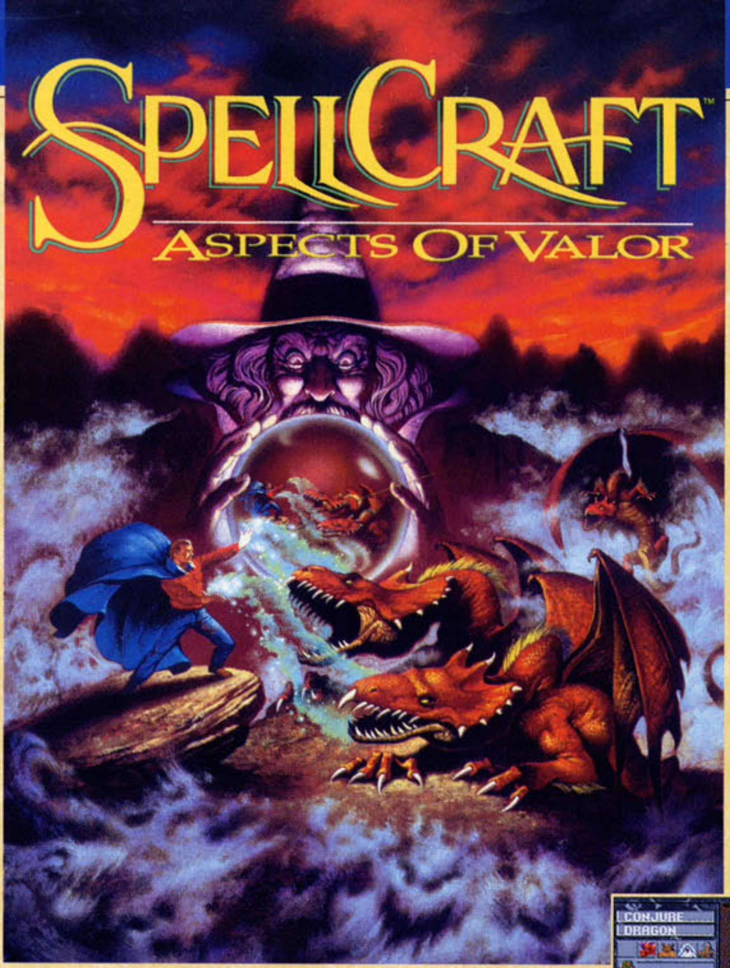
So, it was with great exaltation that I read a quotation from Virginia Woolf stating a position diametrically opposed to Fitzgerald's. The British critic, who cared nothing about the game of baseball itself, stated "It is no coincidence that the best of Mr. Lardner's stories are about games." She went further to state that writing about baseball had allowed Lardner to solve one of the most difficult problems for an American writer, "it has given him a clue, a center, a meeting place for the diverse activities of people whom a vast continent isolates, whom no tradition controls. Games give him what society gives his English brother."

Even though Virginia Woolf never saw a computer game in her life, she has underscored the positive effects of the hobby. If baseball, the national game, was a centering force early in our century, how much more can computer games provide both a focus and a forum for our society on the brink of the information age. Where the national sport has offered meaning and mythos in the past, but has been somewhat devalued by the corporate machinations of modern baseball, computer games have the opportunity and potential to humanize the machines at the center of the technological revolution, as well as to communicate knowledge and transform that knowledge into meaningful myth.

Sure, it's just a game, but games are a laboratory for human interaction and an analog for real-world systems. As a laboratory, we find ourselves able to experiment with new and old approaches to problems, without authentic risk. As an analog, we are able to learn concepts and discover insights that should inspire us to do further research (after all, we probably are not going to play a game on a subject unless we have some interest to begin with).

Sure, it's just a game, but games are one way that human beings communicate in code with each other and the new era of connectivity which seems to be opening up in computer games may be our generation's ritual dance that supplies meaning to the hunt, rat race and struggle to be found in life. Maybe those humiliating defeats and disrupted alliances in wargames and multi-player games will teach us that aggressiveness is not *always* rewarded. Maybe those significant drops in simulated portfolio value to be experienced in investment games will keep us from making the same mistakes in our real retirement portfolios. Maybe the recruitment of that untrustworthy NPC into our fictional parties will put us on the alert when we have to make real personnel decisions at work. Maybe...

State of the Industry: Within the industry as a whole, we find ourselves torn between the harbingers of "doom and gloom," who point to the failure of CD-I and CDTV to generate much interest for optical-based, interactive products within the mass market of consumers, and the prophets of affluence, who point to computer game companies as potential take-over targets for the entertainment conglomerates. We find ourselves nodding in a measure of agreement with both sides, but end up having to serve as a voice in the wilderness by reminding everyone that it will be *quality software* that will eventually intrigue the masses enough to get over their inherent fear of the hardware and, as a result, become involved with entertainment software. The entertainment conglomerates may well move in when the interest is there, but they certainly have no need to "move in" until the public perceives the value of CD-based interactive entertainment as being more than simply "the same games with digitized voice and more pictures." Until those "must play" games are available on CD-only formats, we really have no idea of the potential for CD-based interactive entertainment. CGW



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